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THE
PRINCIPLES
AND
DUTIES
OF THE
Christian Religion,

Consider'd & Explain'd;

In order to Retrieve and Promote the
CHRISTIAN LIFE,

Or that HOLINESS, without
which no man shall see the LORD.

By JOHN MAPLETOFT, D. D.
Vicar of St. Lawrence Jewry.

John XVII. Ver. 3.

*This is Life eternal, that they might know Thee the
only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom
Thou hast sent.*

With a Collection of suitable DEVOTIONS,
&c. for several occasions.

LONDON,
Printed and Sold by Joseph Downing in Bartholomew-Close
near West-Smithfield, MDCCX.

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I am sure.

With a dedication of suitable DEVOTIONS,
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Printed and Sold by J. B. B. in Strand-street, near
St. Martin's Church, MDCCLXX.

To his esteemed good Friends, the Inhabitants of the United Parishes of St. Lawrence-Jewry, and of St. Mary Magdalen Milk-street.

STO Paul's heart's desire and Prayer to Rom. X. 1.
 GOD for his Brethren was, that they might be saved. And as this ought to be, for very weighty reasons, and I presume is, the most earnest desire and constant prayer of all who have any charge of the Souls of others; so would a rational hope of meeting all their Flock in Heaven, be an infinitely greater joy to every faithful Pastor, than the possession of the whole World.

But however faint such our hopes are, and how unpromising soever, if not either scandalously wicked, or careless and supine, the lives of too many appear to be, who yet pretend to be Christians; the Ministers of the Gospel are still obliged to do all that lies in their power, to promote the glory and kingdom of GOD, and the salvation of their Souls more especially, whom they have a more particular relation to, interest in, and concern for, by their place and station.

This Consideration, and the earnest desire I have to acquit my self in the best manner I can of that Duty which I owe to those under my more immediate care, made me resolve to put together this plain account of those fundamental doctrines and necessary duties of our holy Religion, which I had so

often endeavoured to imprint, by the blessing of GOD, upon the minds of my hearers, in a course of preaching for many years amongst those of these Parishes.

X. 10. And I thought, my brethren, that I could not leave a more proper Legacy, or a better token of my true Love to you, and of my hearty concern for all your immortal Souls, either to your selves, or to your posterity, than such a discourse as might bring again to your minds what you had formerly heard, and so might conduce to promote that sincere Piety, and universal Holiness of heart and life, which may by the grace of GOD, and your own serious attention to, and diligent practice of what you will there find laid down, give us all good ground to hope for an happy and a joyful meeting in the next World, when we shall all appear before the Judgment-seat of CHRIST, that every one of us may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

2 Cor. V.
10.

Now that which is chiefly aimed at in these popular discourses is, that whatsoever is there delivered may be true, plain, and useful; that what is asserted may be the most natural and obvious sense of the words of the holy Scripture, or evidently deducible from, and conformable to that only rule and standard of our Religion.

That it be as plain, as it can be made, to those of the meanest capacities, provided they will duly attend to, seriously and frequently consider, and honestly endeavour to fix in their memories those important lessons, of our holy Religion, which I had to

sons, with but the same care and diligence they use in all other things, which they are much concerned to learn and to know; since these are of so much greater consequence to them than any other thing can be.

And then that what is taught may be useful, by the blessing of GOD upon such our honest and faithful endeavours; that it may tend to inform those aright who have not enough acquainted themselves with the great end, with the true nature and design of the Gospel of CHRIST, and with the terms of that Covenant of Grace; or, if it may be, to awaken out of their horrid stupidity even those deplorably brutish men, who either live in the constant neglect, if not contempt of GOD, and of his Laws, and so of their own Souls, now in this clear light of the Gospel; or who lull their consciences asleep with false hopes of being saved by the merits of CHRIST, without the least degree of love to GOD, or of due care to please him in all things; or to demolish and root out the false security of those who satisfy themselves with some such partial half-way obedience as the Scripture declares will leave them short of Heaven, and so bring them to inevitable destruction of Soul and Body.

Some one, or more of these, is the true and miserable case of all those poor ignorant wretches, who, without either taking sufficient care to know their duty, or complying with what they do know, venture their eternal happiness or misery upon those good meanings and resolutions to repent before they die, upon their death-bed at least, which have betrayed already such vast num-

bers into the pit of Hell; or who pretending to repent, without all possibility of bringing forth those good fruits so expressly required in the Gospel; do vainly hope to enter into life, without having made any conscience of keeping the Commandments of GOD.

These bare desire and most agreeable prospect of doing some good to others, and more especially of this kind, and where the obligation too is so very great, and so particular as here, is certainly a sufficient reason for publishing what a man hath any hopes that it may have the desired effect, at least with some of those whom he is so nearly concerned for, and in. However, two things farther may be alledged in justification of this plain treatise, after so many excellent and more accurate compositions of this nature which have lately appeared among us.

First, That when I had resolved to leave some book of this kind as a Legacy to every house of these Parishes, I was advised by some, whom I took to be very good judges, rather to present them with somewhat of my own composition, than of any other man's; especially since they were all of them, I have occasion to believe, already furnished (besides Catechisms, and other small treatises of Religion) not only with that very useful abstract of the *Whole Duty of Man*, entitled, *The whole Christian's Christian*, sent to every Family, but with that excellent book itself. These at least of our Communion, to whom, and to all others of these Parishes, I openly declared my self ready to send that book gratis, if they had it not, and desired it from me, if they did not already have it.

Another reason is, that some of the best of these Parishes, (if GOD may be the Judge, who honours them only, and esteems them the best, who most honour him, and who take most care to own him and his Religion, by worshipping and obeying him,) have desired to read, at their leisure, some of those plain discourses which they had heard from the Pulpit, perhaps oftner than once or twice, in a course of above twenty five years preaching; with whose desire, and that of some others too, I thought I might best comply by this publick account of the substance of what they had heard at several times, and were well-pleased farther to consider by themselves, or with their families.

If some points seem to be too largely handled, or too frequently insisted upon and inculcated, they will, I believe, generally appear to be such as may deserve, and perhaps need, most mens second or third, or oftner repeated thoughts. For they are most commonly such fundamental, incontestable, and necessary truths, that if our minds were thoroughly possessed with, and brought under the power of them, by actual reflection, and due consideration upon all occasions which offer, they would influence and govern our whole man, and would make all other rules needless in order to the practice of that universal holiness here, which will end in the assured and eternal happiness of that life which is to come.

For example; If men once had their Souls effectually turned towards GOD, and fixed upon him as the only true Good, and center of rest to immortal Spirits, and their minds thoroughly possess'd with the love of him above all things, and so had placed all their happiness.

nels in serving and pleasing him here, and enjoying him hereafter; and if they loved their Neighbours, for GOD's sake, as they do love themselves; and then again, if they loved themselves so as in all reason they ought to do, i. e. if they took more care about, and had more concern for their never dying Souls, than their short-lived, perishing bodies; they would never need any other directions, but what would most naturally flow from these general principles. No man thus resolved, and living under the power of these important reflections and plain duties, would ever commit any one wilful sin. The Kingdom of Satan would be wholly destroyed, and GOD *would be all in all* to every one of us.

And it may be farther alledged in defense of the repetition of some, and the enlargement upon others of the most necessary, but too little considered, and too apparently neglected duties, as well as doctrines of the christian Religion, that this treatise was and is designed to be read by parts every Lord's-Day in their families, and by or to the Children and Servants of those for whose use it was chiefly composed and published; that so it might be read over twice every year by or to such persons, as are not furnished with other, or at least with more useful books to them; to which end it is divided into twenty six Chapters or Sections, one for each Lord's-Day.

As to the Prayers added at the end of this book, it may be proper to acquaint you, that three of those seven, composed for the daily use either of families, or of particular persons, are for the substance those forms,

Some

The DEDICATION.

Some one or other of which, or some parts of which, the successive inhabitants of these Parishes have been accustomed to hear from their respective Preachers, for about fifty years last past.

I will not, I dare not doubt, but that some of those several thousands of small treatises, which have been in several years dispersed, one of each sort in every Family in these Parishes, viz. *Christian Monitors, Signs of Christianity, Whole Duties of a Christian, Plain Instructions for the young and ignorant, Pastoral Letters, Pastoral Advices in order to confirmation, Directions for the devout performance of public worship, Christians daily devotions, Exhortations to House-keepers, to set up the worship of GOD in their families, Persuasives to the Observance of the Lord's-Day, Answers to mens excuses for not coming to the holy Communion, Essays towards making the Knowledge of Religion easie, Christians way to Heaven, Persuasives to Lay-Conformity,* (which last books were sent particularly to all the Dissenters of these Parishes) have been of some use to those who received them: I doubt not, I say, but that some of these useful treatises have already had some good effect, and may have yet more, by the blessing of our good GOD, if Parents, and Masters, and Children, and Servants can be persuaded to use them, as was earnestly desired of them, in particular addresses prefixt to some of those books when sent to them.

And, I thank GOD, I have the comfort to find that all of them have not been lost to the receivers; I wish I could have said none had. However, I know no better way of discharging what I owe to all your Souls, which

which I hope GOD will graciously accept, and that he will pardon whatever I may have come short my duty, on what account soever.

The good intention I had, and that real good which those persons, for whose use this plain discourse was chiefly published may, by the blessing of GOD, receive from the repeated perusal, and serious consideration of these most necessary and important truths, will, 'tis hoped, more than excuse any defects it may be otherwise chargeable with.

And to this end, all Parents and Masters, into whose hands it is put, are earnestly requested to take care that some part of it (not excluding other books of that nature) may be read every *Lord's-Day* to, or by their Children and Servants: and that GOD may be daily worshipp'd in their Families, by the use of some of these forms of Prayer thereunto annexed, or some others; and that the additional devotions for the *Lord's-Day* be not omitted, unless they are already furnished with, and make use of some other prayers which answer all the same ends.

However this design may succeed, I have hereby done the best I could, to make some amends, as I before said, for what failures in my duty towards you I may have been guilty of, by reason of my infirmities, of what kind soever; and in order to deliver my own Soul, through the mercies of GOD in JESUS CHRIST, that no man's blood, if any shall

Ezekiel
XXXIII.

die in his iniquity, may be required at my hands. I have therefore faithfully, after St. Peter's great example (if I may be allowed to use his words, at that humble distance which becomes to unworthy a Servant of our common

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mon Lord,) I have not only not been negli- 2 Pet. I.
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 the present truth; but I have endeavoured, that
 you and your Children may be able, after my Ver. 15.
 decease, to have these things always in remembrance;
 that so, by your giving diligence to make your Ver. 10,
 calling and election sure, you may never fall; but 11.
 that an entrance may be ministred unto every
 one of you abundantly into the everlasting King-
 dom of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST;
 which is, and shall be the daily and earnest
 Prayer of,

Your faithful Friend and

June 30.
1710.

Servant in our Lord,

JOHN MAPLETOFT.

THE

THE DEDICATION

non Lord, I have not only not been well - 2 For I
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calling and election sure, you may never fall; but
that an entrance may be made into every
one of you standing only into the everlasting King-
dom of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST;
which is, and shall be the daily and certain

Prayer of

Your faithful Friend and

Servant in our Lord,

June 30.
1710.

JOHN MARLTON.

THE

THE PREFACE.

IT is an amazing as well as a very mortifying consideration to those who have occasion to make the trial, that such numbers, not only of Hypocrites, who in a form of godliness do allow themselves in some known sin or other; but even of well-meaning Christians, as they seem to be, are so shamefully ignorant of the great Principles and necessary Duties of that Religion, by the belief and practice whereof they hope to be saved, as must needs render their Salvation as the best extremely hazardous, and their lives very uncomfortable.

Now this deplorable ignorance proceeds from their not having taken care enough, and time enough to consider well, and to be inwardly persuaded of the truth of the peculiar Doctrines of Christianity, and the necessity of their compliance with all the Laws of CHRIST; so that their whole Religion is rather a prepossession from their education, and the deference they pay to the judgment of others, than any certain knowledge they can have of what they never thought of, at least not with that attention and concern which these weighty things both most deserve and require.

'Tis for want of being well instructed in the great truths of our holy Religion, and letting them sink into their minds, and make a due impression there.

there, that so many who hear, and perhaps too do read sermons, and other books of that nature, come under that dreadful character St. Paul gives
 2Tim.III. of those silly women, who are laden with sins,
 6, 7. and led away with divers lusts, viz. That they are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

And since such want of due consideration, and of after thoughts, or serious reflexion on what we are all so nearly concerned to know, and to remember, and to practise in order to our eternal welfare, is the most general cause why persons otherwise well disposed reap so little benefit from what they so often hear and read; their giving themselves more time and more leisure to think upon, and duly to weigh and to digest these undoubted fundamentals of faith and practice, seems to be the proper remedy and cure of that no less dangerous than common evil, by which 'tis to be feared so many perish and are lost for ever.

Now nothing is more evident, than that the same discourses may be very much more edifying, or more useful to all the wise purposes of Religion, when they are thus in every one's hand and power to read them as often, and as leisurely as they please; and to repeat and to reconsider, as much and as often as they will, those parts which most affect or concern them, or which are most necessary to be remembered by themselves, or by others under their care, than when they are once for all, or perhaps oftener, at several times, delivered from the Pulpit: Which reflection was the chief reason of this undertaking, with particular relation had to those for whose use it was at first designed.

If any shall think fit to read two of the twenty six Chapters the same Lord's-Day to their families.

or by themselves, I believe it would be best to read them at two several times, and to allow some space between to consider of what was read or heard.

And indeed, where one Chapter only is read each Lord's-Day, it may be most proper to read but one half of it or thereabouts at one time: And it might be useful sometimes, if not necessary, that some, perhaps most of the several paragraphs or short divisions of this and of other books of this kind were read to, or by the more ignorant and uninstructed persons at least twice over, with due deliberation, and some short time allowed at the end of each reading for reflexion.

Children and the more ignorant persons may be greatly helped by putting some of those questions to them, after the reading of one or two or more paragraphs, giving a more particular account of any Doctrine or Duty, which are for that purpose printed at the end of the book. This would both make them more attentive, and would much better fix these weighty truths in their minds, by which they must govern their lives, if they will be Christians any more than in name.

The larger Contents at the head of each Chapter or Sunday, should be also distinctly read both before it is begun, and as soon as it is finished; and some account given, if not after the paragraph, at least after the chapter, of what is therein contained. By their answering some of the forementioned questions, children and others will be the more fully instructed in what they have read or heard, and the better retain it in their memories.

How inconsiderable soever these plain and particular directions may seem, or may be to those who understand themselves and their Religion so

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as they ought to do, they were not here to be omitted, for the sake of those many more, whose less serious and unthinking age, or condition and education, or former habitual neglect of those important things, make such assistance not only useful but necessary, in order to their improvement by what they usually read or hear to so very little purpose, for want of these, or the like ways of engaging their attention.

For if men could once be prevailed upon duly to consider, and to understand for themselves, without depending upon the bare affirmation of others, and to examine both themselves and others too under their care, how far they do understand these things, and then so to apply to themselves the great truths and duties of the Gospel, as to be influenced and governed thereby, their lives would be more suitable to their profession, that is, more christian, and more hopeful, and more comfortable to their own selves; and their eternal welfare would be less hazardous (not to say hopeless) than it can be, while they remain in such fatal ignorance and stupid neglect of what they are concerned above all other things to consider, and to know, and to believe, and to do.

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THE
PRINCIPLES & DUTIES

OF THE
Christian Religion

Consider'd and Explain'd, &c.

SUNDAY I.

A firm belief that there is a GOD, is the Foundation of all Religion. Ignorance, or a bare customary supposal only from Education of the general Truths on which our Religion is founded, viz. That there is a GOD, that the Christian Religion is most certainly true, &c. The most general cause of Infidelity and Impiety among professed Christians. Of Religion in general. That Religion is the one thing needful; the whole of Man on several accounts.

BEFORE we come to give a particular account of that holy Religion which is so generally professed, and at the same time so little either understood or practised by those vast numbers
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who distinguish themselves from Pagans and Infidels, more by the name than by the lives of Christians; it will be proper briefly to enquire into and consider the firmness of that foundation on which all Religion is to be built; and then to shew the great reasonableness, the excellency, the necessity and advantages of Religion in general.

Now true Religion is that grateful Acknowledgment, Worship, Love and Obedience which every reasonable Creature owes to the first Original of its being, its Preserver and constant Benefactor, on whose Favour alone all its happiness depends.

And all Religion, taken in its greatest latitude, must be founded not on a slight opinion, or fear; or suspicion only, (such as is commonly found in the most stupid and profligate Sinners) but on a well-considered and well-grounded assurance, that there is such a supreme, invisible Being, who at first made, and ever since upholds, governs, and disposes of the whole Creation.

One of the most evident, and perhaps most universal causes of that impiety and wickedness, which hath over-run that part of the World which is called Christian, seems to be that prodigious ignorance, and the consequent unbelief of the most general and fundamental Principles of all Religion, which is every where so apparent and scandalously visible.

Now such Principles are these; That there is a GOD, who sees and weighs the de-

designs and actions of Men : That the Scriptures are the Word of that GOD ; and that the Revelations he hath therein made to us of his Will, and of his love and favour to those who believe and obey the Gospel of his Son, and of a future state of Rewards or Punishments, are all of them most undoubtedly true.

For no Man who hath well considered, and is inwardly persuaded of the certainty and importance of these great truths, can easily, or indeed at all allow himself to act contrary to his settled judgment, in a matter of so great moment and concern to him, viz. when the question is, Whether he shall be happy or miserable for ever? No Man, who firmly believes there is a God, and a Life, and a Judgment to come, can resolve to live as if he were sure there were neither.

If these fundamentals were deeply rooted in the Minds of Men by a due attention to, and frequent reflexion on the evidence they carry with them, and the great consequence they draw after them, their Lives would be generally speaking such as their belief is.

The true foundation then of all religious Worship must be laid in a firm, unshaken belief, and, from due consideration and thought, a full Persuasion of the Existence of GOD.

He who cometh to GOD, must believe that Heb. XI. 6. *he is.* He must believe for himself, and see him that is invisible with his own eyes, if I may so say, that is, with the inward sense

sense of his own Mind. He must not give a bare traditional assent to this great fundamental truth, and say as he hath been taught, or suppose it only as other Men commonly do. For no Man can properly be said to believe, or to be persuaded of that which he never well considered, or imployed his mind about.

It will be very useful therefore here to demonstrate by St. Paul's irresistible Argument, that there is an infinitely powerful, wise, and good GOD, who gave being to, and who preserves and governs the Universe, that is, all those things which he created.

Now by this name or term GOD, we do understand an eternal, incomprehensible, infinite Mind, Spirit, or invisible Being, without body, parts, or passions, who hath all possible Perfections in and from himself, and who is the Creator, and the Preserver, and Governour, the first Cause, and the last End of all things.

And that there is, and cannot but be such an eternal, self-existent, adorable Essence, Nature, or Being, will easily appear to any Man, who wisely and seriously considers, not only the admirable beauty, order, and steady course of the whole visible Creation; but even its origination, its beginning, or first coming into being, of which it had not been capable without an all-wise and an all-powerful Creator. Since no material substance, no first matter, or any thing produced out of it, could possibly make it self; for then it must of

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necessity be before it was; Which is a palpable contradiction.

Besides the successive generations of men from Father to Son, down to our own selves, must necessarily carry us up to some first Man, who could no more make himself than any House or Clock can, or any other piece of much less artful contrivance; and therefore that first man must owe his coming into Being to a wiser and superior original cause. No man, in the true use of his Reason; *that candle of the Lord*, which Prov. XX. was given him to light him to the Knowledge of his Maker, can doubt of these bright and flaming truths.

No man also who can see, and think, and can make any serious reflexion upon the great variety, the beauty, the order of all things, the admirable contrivance of the whole sublunary Creation of Plants and Animals, the fitness of all things for the end they were designed for; or can reflect on the constant regular motion or the vast Fabrick of the heavenly bodies, some of them many millions of miles distant from our earth, as the best Mathematicians teach us, without owning and admiring the sovereign Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness of the great Creator and Lord of all things.

And thus *the invisible things of him*, that Rom. I. 20. is, of the great Author of all, *even his eternal Power and GOD HEAD*, are clearly seen from the Creation of the World, being understood by the things that are made: whence St. Paul concludes, that all they are without excuse, who when they thus know GOD, as every

Rom. I. 21

Isai. I. 3, 4.

man cannot but do, if he opens his eyes, and makes use of his Reason in considering these matters, *glorify him not as GOD, neither are thankful; but become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart is darkened.* These are they who, *professing themselves to be wise, like those herds of Scepticks, Deists, and practical Atheists in these our evil days, pretending to more deep penetration and insight into things, and more freedom of thought than much wiser and better men have, become in truth the most sensible and most deplorable Fools and beasts of all mankind.* For the Ox and the Ass know their owner; they live up to the highest Principle of that nature GOD hath given them: But all evil doers, *men laden with iniquity, do not only not know, not consider, but do rebel against, and provoke to anger that their Lord who made, who nourished, and who brought them up, to the great astonishment of the Heavens and the Earth.* As the Prophet there describes that sinful nation to whom he was sent.

And that there is a supreme eternal Mind, or invisible, most wise, good, and powerful Being, who is the first cause of the Universe, was ever owned and asserted by all the best, wisest, and most considering men in all ages, and in all places of the civilized World.

This great fundamental truth was never either doubted of, or denied by any, save only by those monsters of men, whose gross stupidity, horrid self-neglect, and misuse of their natural powers and faculties, or more than

than brutish sensuality, had extinguished their Reason, and sunk them so very deep into the bare animal nature, as to have nothing but their humane shape and speech left, whereby to distinguish them from that better sort of brute Beasts, whom GOD made to be in that low form or order of irrational nature, into which these poor unthinking brutes of men do degrade themselves, by their affected and wilful ignorance, and burying their Souls in their Bodies.

No man, endued with common sense and reason, ever denied the Being or Providence of GOD, except such whose vile affections and horribly wicked lives, or diabolical pride, had provoked GOD to give them over *Rom. I. 28.* to a reprobate mind, or to a mind void of judgment. And indeed all those who either deny the Being and Providence of GOD, or live without due regard to him, and care to please him, whether by reason of their minds being drowned in fleshly or worldly lusts, or hardened in pride, as was that of *Nebuchadnezzar*, seem to have their hearts *Dan. V. 20,* also made like the Beasts, as his was, by *21,* GOD's just Judgment, when he was driven from the sons of men, and had his dwelling with the wild Asses, and was made to eat grass as the Oxen.

Which sensible degradation of an haughty Atheist, is a lively image and representation of all those who are brutalized to that degree, as either wholly to forget, or to affront, and in effect, deny their Creator by their impious maxims, or ungodly lives.

Or, if there be any whole nations found, as some tell us, who seem to have no notion at all of a supreme Being and Creator of the World, they are such only as are so stupid and unman'd, that they have lost the use almost of Speech, as well as of Reason, and all Footsteps of the Prerogative of humane nature, and of civil life, and useful society. They are such more than half brutes in the shape of men as were never able to number beyond five, or such as never heard of, or saw fire, till some modern discoveries affrighted them with the sight, and to them astonishing effects of it.

So that for a man to live without acknowledging and obeying his Creator, is in effect to abdicate or renounce his reasonable nature, and to sink himself into the lowest degree of brutality he is capable of.

The Existence or Being of a GOD thus now established and evidently proved, we come next to treat of Religion in general.

That we may the better understand the great end and design of the Christian Religion, and may get our minds more thoroughly awakened to a quick and lasting sense of that indispensable obligation it lays upon us to universal Holiness, and to an exemplary Conversation; it may be useful to consider first the most natural grounds, the obligation to, and the necessity and advantages of Religion in that more general notion in which it affects and takes in all mankind.

Now this is usually called *natural Religion*; because 'tis what we are taught by the
bare

bare light of nature. 'Tis that natural homage and service which every man is obliged to do, or to pay to his Creator, in acknowledgment of that Prerogative GOD hath invested him with, in making him rational and intelligent, and so capable of knowing, of loving, and of serving the first Author of his being, his Preserver, and daily Benefactor.

And tho' this primitive *natural Religion* be the ground-work and foundation of those higher improvements of the Knowledge and Worship of GOD, which are made both in the *Jewish*, and in the Christian Dispensation or State; yet is it fitly enough distinguished by that name from those more clear Revelations, which GOD was pleased to make of himself, first to the Patriarchs, then to the Posterity of *Abraham* his friend, who was an unparall'd Pattern of Faith and Obedience, and afterwards by *Moses* and the Prophets to the *Jewish Nation*, and lastly, in the fulness of time, to the whole race of *Adam*, by his Son JESUS and his Apostles.

For this *natural Religion* is founded only on those Manifestations which GOD hath made of himself to all men, in and by his visible Works of Creation, and Providence, or his Preservation of the Universe in that order, and in that good Estate and Disposition in which we now see it, and so well fitted to all those ends and purposes for which he designed the whole and every part of this beautiful and admirable frame of the World.

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All which things are indeed discoverable by the careful use and due application of those innate Principles or Powers of right reason, of consideration and reflexion, with which GOD furnished all intelligent Beings in the day of their Creation.

Now all true Religion is a constant disposition, study, and care to know, and to worship GOD aright, that is, suitably to his nature, and to his perfections; suitably to our obligations to him, and to our dependence upon him; and suitably to those Faculties he hath given us for that very end, that we might know, and love, and serve him.

The very name of *Religion*, tho' it be of Pagan Extraction, imports that diligence and application of our mind, that deep and serious consideration of all things pertaining to the Worship of GOD, with which all the wisest and the best men in all civilized Nations and Countries, have ever agreed, that a matter of that consequence ought to be studied and practised. 'Tis called Religion à *Relegendo, id est, diligenter retrahendo*, Cic. that is, from reading over again and again, from reviewing, re-examining, upon our second and wisest thoughts, what is so much both our duty and our interest.

And indeed the knowing, and worshiping, and serving Almighty GOD, so as we ought, is the nearest concern, the most important business any man can possibly have in this life. 'Tis that which our blessed Lord truly calls, *the one thing needful*; because no other thing in the whole World

Luke X. 42.

World holds any proportion, or is of any consequence to us in comparison with this.

Solomon, once the wisest of all meer men, had made a narrow search, in that book styled *Ecclesiastes*, or *the Preacher*, written for that very purpose, after the nature, the true wisdom, and the true happiness of man. And this wise man, after his long and great experience in the most flourishing state of Riches, Honours, and Pleasures, which a large Empire could afford him in a long course of life, comes at last to this peremptory decision upon the whole matter, *viz.* That true and solid Piety, or Religion, a constant due regard to GOD, and a daily care to please him in all things, is the only wisdom, and the only foundation whereon 'tis possible to build the true and lasting happiness of man.

He had by his own experience found, and proved at large, that all other things, in which foolish and wicked men seek for rest and felicity, GOD a-part, are nothing but meer vanity and vexation of spirit; whence he begins with his conclusion, if we may so say, or with that which he all-along drives at, and makes out, *Vanity of vanities, saith Eccles. I. 2. the Preacher, Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* And consequently hereupon he ends all his enquiry and search after Wisdom and Happiness in this single, but weighty and irrefragable maxim, *Let us hear the conclusion Eccles. XII. 1. of the whole matter. Fear GOD, and keep his Commandments: so this is the whole duty of man.* As if he should say, this is the last result, and the upshot of all a wise man's

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observations and reflexions upon all these transitory things, and upon the vanity of the pretences they all make to be our happiness; that we can never find what we all seek for in any other thing, in any other way than that of duty and obedience to GOD, and in a firm dependence upon him; or that all the knowledge and experience of the World, all wise considerations of the life of man, and of all humane affairs, tend to engage us in Religion; that they naturally lead us back to that GOD from whence we came; and teach us, and oblige us to fix and to centre our Souls upon him as our last end, or sovereign good, and the only true final happiness of immortal Spirits.

Fearing GOD, and keeping his Commandments, i. e. Religion arising from a true inward principle, viz. that Fear, and Reverence, and Love, which we owe to our Creator, and then duly practised by uniform obedience to his Laws and Will, is, as Solomon tells us, the whole Duty (as we read it) of Man. But these words, *this is the whole of man*, are of a more large extent and comprehension. They are most literally render'd from the original, by the most ancient and authentick Translations, *For this is every man, or every man, or all man, or the whole man is this.*

As if he should say, the great design and end of man's Creation, the very Essence, Specific or peculiar Nature, or Being, the utmost Perfection, Wisdom, and Happiness; and consequently the great Duty,

ty, and chief Business and Employment of every man in this life; all that he is, all that he hath, all that he can do to any wise and good purpose, all that he can desire or hope for, is comprehended in his due regard to, and dependence upon, and constant care to obey, serve, and please his great Creator, Law-giver and Judge, which Solomon enforces with that irresistible argument for an early, constant, and universal Piety, or Holiness of Heart and Life, *for GOD shall bring every work into judgment Eccles. XII. (at the last day) with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.* 14

Religion then, we see, is every man's *Great All*, it answers the end for which GOD made him. It is his chief property and distinction from all visible living Creatures. He alone is intelligent and rational, and so he alone is capable of knowing, loving, and serving the great Author of his being. It is the highest perfection of his nature, and foundation of his happiness here below; and his only sure way and means to be for ever happy in a glorious immortality. And for all these reasons it is his main affair, his true and honourable profession or calling, the most important, and indeed the only thing he is much concerned to manage with his utmost care and prudence in the course of his life.

And thus we now see true Piety, due attendance upon, and adherence to GOD, complies with, and comes up to the original design, the frame, or make, and all the

the advantages and the obligations of man. It satisfies all his reasonable desires, supplies the shortness and deficiency of all outward things. It employs and fills, enlarges and exalts his nobler Powers and Capacities; and it alone can make good his pretences to the dignity and prerogative of being made in the image, and after the likeness of his Creator, the sovereign Lord of all.

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SUNDAY II.

The Motives to, and Advantages of Religion. That it is the Design or chief End of man's Creation; that for which GOD made man. That it is man's most essential Property, and distinguishing Character, or his very nature, as he is man. His understanding and will, whereby he is capable of knowing and loving GOD, are that Image of GOD in which man was made. Religion is man's utmost perfection, and his only capacity for happiness here and hereafter. 'Tis the highest improvement of his nobler faculties. It puts him under GOD's more immediate care and protection. It is his only great affair, and the chief business of his life. The sum of the whole.

WE shall now therefore more particularly consider those cogent reasons for our fearing GOD, and keeping his Commandments, which are comprised in these few words, for this is the whole of man, or every man, or all man, or the whole man is this. And we shall shew, 1. That knowing and serving GOD here, and being happy in the Enjoyment of him for ever, is the end or design for which GOD made man in his own Image. 2. That Religion is founded in the

the very nature of man. His capacity for, and the exercise of his mind about GOD, the Father of his Spirit, is his peculiar and distinguishing Character. 'Tis his very Essence or Nature, his most essential Property, as he is a rational Creature. 3. That Religion is his utmost Perfection, his Excellency and Glory; the noblest Privilege, and the highest Improvement of his nature; and so his true and only foundation for happiness, both in this life, and in that which will never end. 4. That *fearing GOD, and keeping his Commandments*, being thus every man's biggest Interest, and that most indispensable duty which he owes both to GOD and to himself, and by a just consequence to his Neighbour too, is and ought to be esteemed the proper employment and use of a man's self, the first and great business of his life. And that such due regard to GOD, and to his own well-being for ever, ought to give law, and life, and motion to all the designs and actions of every wise man.

1. That Religion, or the Knowledge, and Worship, and Enjoyment of GOD, is the great end for which GOD made man, will easily appear from the consideration of those powers, and faculties, or capacities with which GOD hath furnished man in order to this end.

The true end of any thing in all productions, either of nature, or of art, is that for which that thing is designed, best contrived, and chiefly fitted by its Maker; and whereby it attains its utmost perfecti-

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on and most proper use. And we come best to the knowledge of this end, by carefully heeding the structure, or the frame and contrivance of such thing, by which it is made, and fitted for such or such uses.

And nothing can be more certain in our present case, than that GOD, the all-wise Architect, must have so framed and contrived every particular nature, or kind of being, as it was, or might be best suited to, and most fit for that end to which he designed it; and consequently, that the operation and use for which GOD hath peculiarly fitted every rank and order of Creatures, must be the end for which such a sort of Beings was so made by him.

And now GOD having furnished our Souls with two divine and noble faculties, *viz.* with an *understanding*, whereby we are capable of seeking after, and finding, and knowing GOD in some measure, as the first cause, and the last end of all things; and also with a *Will*, whereby we are capable of loving, of causing the Supreme Good, the great Author, as of our Beings, so of all the good we do or can enjoy, as our portion and our final happiness; it is from hence evident, that man was made principally to know, and to love, and serve his Creator; and by thus approaching to, and uniting himself by choice and affection to, or with the Sovereign Good, the most proper object both of his Knowledge and of his Love, to find his true happiness and his natural centre of rest in that GOD

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who thus designed, and framed, and fitted man for himself, and for that peculiar felicity of living to him here, to his Honour and Glory, and with him, under the communications of his favour and goodness for evermore.

2. Religion is not only the chief end for which GOD created Man; but 'tis also the very nature, if we may so say, an essential property of man, as man, as he is a rational Creature. A capacity for this Knowledge, and Love, and Service of GOD, which we call Religion, is that peculiar character or stamp of the divine Image upon humane nature, whereby man is distinguished from, and exalted above the whole visible Creation.

Gen. I. 26.

Wisd. II. 23.

Almighty GOD was pleased to make man, his favourite creature, in his own Image, and after his own likeness, as we read. And he so made him, not only by putting into his earthly body an immortal Spirit or Soul, whereby man became an Image of the eternal duration of GOD. But this Image of GOD, besides that and all other resemblance of power and dominion over the inferior living Creatures, which GOD gave to him, doth seem chiefly to consist in those more noble and divine faculties of understanding and will, or rational choice; whereby man alone, of all the visible Creatures, is made capable, and so is obliged (since GOD never made any thing in vain, and to no purpose) to know, and to love, to obey, and to serve his Creator.

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It is of the essential nature, or the distinguishing excellency and property of GOD, who is infinitely wise, and powerfully and good, or, is Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness in the abstract, perfectly to know, and proportionably to love himself. And in this perfection of the Knowledge and of the Love of himself, who is the supreme Good, we men do best conceive (so far as we are able to frame any notion of what so much exceeds our comprehension) that the felicity of GOD himself, at least in some measure, if not chiefly, doth consist.

And consequently hereto, those faculties and capacities of knowing and of loving him, which GOD hath given to man, and to him only in the whole visible World, is that image of GOD, and that likeness to GOD, in, and after which he made man.

And such degrees of this Knowledge, and of this Love of GOD, as a man by study and contemplation, and the aids of GOD's holy Spirit, can, and doth attain to here, make man's true and only happiness in this mortal state: And that more perfect Knowledge, and more perfect Love of GOD, which man will then and there be blessed with, will make him in his measure, and in the proportion of a finite Creature, a partaker of the happiness of GOD himself in the World to come.

And now since Religion, or owning GOD our Creator, and depending upon him, and referring to him, as our last end, is thus founded in our nature, as we are

reasonable Creatures; and since those powers and abilities we have for knowing him, and that strong bent and inclination of our wills, that natural philtre, as *Origen* well styles it, towards the sovereign Good, our only true happiness, are that very image of GOD, which is the proper Excellency and Glory of man; and since Religion is that high prerogative and distinction from the barely animal nature, which GOD hath vouchsafed to man above all living Creatures here below; it evidently appears, that all Atheism, and all Irreligion, or living without GOD in the World, and placing our happiness in any thing beneath him, is the utmost brutality, the most direct and formal abdication, or the total defacing, and most vile prostitution of that image of GOD, after which man was at first made.

For since this owning of GOD as the Author of all Good to us, and care to obey him, is the true characteristick; and most proper and specifick difference and elevation of the humane nature, above the nature of Brutes, (in some of which there appear great footsteps of reason, tho' not the least shew or any pretence to Religion) it evidently follows; that all those imaginary, strong or great, or rather weak and false Wits, and Pretenders to sense without reason, and all stupid unthinking outfides and figures of men, who either deny the Existence or the Providence of GOD, and those visible manifestations he hath made of himself to us, both in his Works, and in his Word, the holy Scriptures; or else,

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who believing these evident and important truths take not due care to inform themselves of, and to govern themselves by his Holy Laws and revealed will; 'tis plain, I say, that they do in effect renounce their rational nature, and do destroy and extinguish that image of GOD which was their high privilege, and their only capacity for any true and lasting felicity.

And thus *man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the Beasts that perish.* Every proud, muddy Atheist, and every sensual, or worldly-minded man; every one who lives either in open contempt and defiance of GOD, and of his Laws, or in a sottish and a careless neglect of his duty to GOD, and of the concerns of his own immortal Soul, doth in effect divest himself of his rational nature; and so he leaves himself nothing whereby to distinguish him from those Beasts of the field, which Almighty GOD had put under his feet, save only that erect shape and figure of man, which, as it was given him for that end, so it ought to raise his Soul towards Heaven, and to remind him of that GOD who made him. A Reflexion which a heathen Poet hath made, to the shame of those earthly-minded, false Christians, who never think higher than their own house-top.

And as GOD hath thus made man for himself, *viz.* for this very end, that he might seek after, and find, and then attend upon his Lord and Governour in the World, and hath also honoured him with

Psal. XLIX.
20.

his own image and likeness, furnishing him with an *understanding* to know, and with a *will* to chuse, and to love, and cleave to the Author of his being, and the Fountain of all his enjoyments; so is man's true and chief felicity to be found only in his devout application to, and in his conjunction with his maker, who thus designed and fitted man for such resemblance to, and participation of himself, as true Religion obliges every one to, and prepares him for.

So that the true happiness of man, even in this life, doth and must consist in the due exercise of his highest powers and faculties, his understanding, and his rational will about their proper object, *viz.* about that GOD who gave them to him, in the best and most perfect manner he is able in this imperfect state; and thus by his adherence to, and imitation of his great Lord and Master, he must as it were naturalize himself to Heaven, and prepare himself for that fuller, that more exalted, and uninterrupted enjoyment of GOD in his kingdom of glory.

For it is sufficiently manifest, and beyond all doubt to every considering man, that no created Being, nothing in the whole Universe, reckoning in man himself amongst the rest, is great enough, or of value enough, to compleat the happiness of man, and to be his last end, and the boundary of all his desires.

Man himself is so far from all pretence to be his own Happiness, or his own sovereign

vereign Good, that in his cold blood, and calm reasoning, he can discover nothing in himself but what must rather serve to mortifie him, to humble and abase him in his own eyes.

Nothing but ignorance and error, pride and folly, weakness and imperfection, unreasonable and ungovernable passions, proneness to the sinful gratifications of the animal life, of sense and body, in opposition to the dictates of right reason, and to the laws of GOD; and in a word, nothing but the fruitful seeds of all Sins, and of all Miseries, and of Death it self, are to be found in this depraved state of nature, and of man's alienation and apostacy from GOD. A strange foundation sure is this for the happiness of a Creature, who was originally made for Holiness and for GOD himself, and for happiness with and in GOD only.

And then if the man looks abroad, and well considers all those poor perishing things the whole World can present to his view, all the noise, empty brags of life, and all the busie toils of ambitious, sensual, or worldly-minded men; after all his fruitless search, he will find nothing that can any way pretend to be his last end or happiness, by satisfying either his understanding, or his desires and wishes.

All earthly Creatures, and all outward things, whether accommodations or advantages, the good things, as they are called, of this mortal state, which yet never made any man the better or more truly

happy, all these are so far from being worthy to be the last end of man, that indeed he is rather their end. For we reasonably may believe, that Almighty GOD made all those things, amongst other ends, for the use of man, over which he gave man dominion in such express terms.

That such poor, scanty, conjectural knowledge of things as is attainable in this life, cannot satisfy a man's *understanding* with a just account of all, or of any of these works of GOD and nature, is too evident to be denied by any fair and modest enquirer. And indeed so palpable is the ignorance, so very short, and so imperfect is the knowledge of the wisest man in this life, that the most acute and penetrating, the most inquisitive and indefatigable minds have been so thoroughly assured of no other thing, as of their own inability to give any tolerable account of themselves, even of their own frame and make. They are at a loss about the first Springs of motion, and about the most apparent and undeniable, and yet most incomprehensible manner of the union and conjunction of their own Soul and Body, and about the inward and most familiar operations of each upon the other. Inasmuch that the most sober and wise enquirers into the nature of things, and the visible Creation of GOD, are so far from placing their final happiness in what they have been able to learn and know, or rather guess at in these matters, that they are usually more humbled, and mortified, by a more lively sense

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of their own unavoidable ignorance, than the more superficial, and much less knowing, and less thinking part of mankind are.

And as no man can ever find his true and compleat satisfaction in such short and narrow scantlings of knowledge as he is capable of here, and consequently not in his *understanding*; so will he come as far short of finding it in his *will* or desire, and in his choice of such objects as seem most to promise it, and are most likely to make up his happiness and full contentment.

Nothing is more frequently and feelingly owned by all who have made the experiment with the greatest advantages for succeeding in it, than that nothing in the World, (nay, we may say, not the whole World it self, if it could be master'd and possessed by one man) is or could be able and sufficient to slake that natural thirst which all men have for happiness.

They who have had most fondness for those illusions and false appearances of happiness, such as are Riches, sensual Pleasure, Glory, Honour, Power, and Empire uncontrollable and unlimited, and who have possessed most of all these, and for the longest periods of this short life, have been most sensibly disappointed of their false deceiving hopes, and most throughly convinced of the folly and madness of taking such wrong measures. I have been every thing, I have had every thing, and I have done every thing that I could wish, said one of the greatest Monarchs of the most flourish-

flourishing Empire then in the World, and nothing hath availed me, nothing can make me a happy man, *Omnia fui, & nihil prodest.* And another often protested, That he had got nothing by his being made Emperor of Rome, &c. but that he should live and die with more trouble and vexation, *Id tantum affectus sum ut occupatio interirem.*

Thus have we made it plainly appear, that as GOD made man so like to himself, that he might be capable of knowing, and of loving, and choosing him the sovereign good, for his final Happiness; so nothing less than GOD can fill the vast capacity of that Soul which he made for the enjoyment of himself, and which he therefore made too great to be satisfied with any thing less, or any thing less durable than that GOD who made it. *I shall be satisfied,* saith the devout Psalmist, *when I awake with thy likeness.* Or, as the other Translation hath it; *When I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.* This true happiness, which is to be begun indeed in this life by all the Children of GOD, will be compleated only in the Kingdom of their Father.

To these weighty considerations we may yet farther add, that Piety, that is, a due Study and Care to know, and to serve GOD, is the highest exaltation and improvement of those nobler and superior faculties in which the Image of GOD seems chiefly to consist.

The understanding of a wise and good man is employed frequently in contemplating,

Psal. XVII.
15.

ting, and admiring, and adoring the unsearchable Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of the Creator, and Preserver, and Governor of the Universe. The rational *will* and affections are employed by him chiefly in chusing and loving, and in cleaving to the immutable supreme Good, as well for the present Support and Comfort, as for the final Happiness of the whole man.

Thus are our Souls enobled, and raised from Earth to Heaven, from these mean perishing objects and false images of good, to that fountain of all true Good, which is unchangeable and eternal, whilst we endeavour to our Power, to imitate and to be like, as our Religion obliges us, to that GOD who designed that we should be made happy by such our conjunction with him, resemblance to him, and enjoyment of him for ever.

Besides all which, we ought to consider yet farther, that Religion, which imports a sincere endeavour to please GOD in all things, and an entire dependence upon him, puts us under his more immediate Care, Government and Protection in this life. And this relation of obedient children, and good and faithful servants, so well grounded, will give us that perfect Peace of mind, arising from the testimony of a good conscience in all things, and that security from all real evil, which are some of the most valuable blessings of this life. And it will also fill us with a comfortable hope and a joyful expectation of those now unconceivable manifestations of the divine Glory, and communications of the

the divine favour and goodness, by and with which every true son of GOD will certainly be made happy to all eternity.

And now if this last proposition only be well considered, and heartily agreed to, viz. That Piety is *the whole of man*, as it is his direct capacity for, and his only possible way or means to attain to his proper felicity or his last end, it will from thence undeniably follow, that Religion is *the whole of man* in yet another sense, viz. that it is, and ought in good reason to be, the whole business, at least the main, and the chief, and constant employment of his life. It ought to be esteemed and attended to as his principal affair, and with a mighty preference to all other things; since 'tis evidently much more his concern, and much more his true interest, than any, or than all other things put together can pretend to be, as hath been above proved.

It is as natural and as necessary for every man to desire to be happy, and to be as much happy as he can, and happy as long as he can, as it is to breath, or to desire to satisfy his most pressing animal appetites of hunger and thirst: and consequently every wise and considering man cannot but make it his first care, to pursue those ways, and to take those courses which alone can bring him to happiness; when he is convinced once that they, and they only, can make good their pretences thereto.

Our translation renders, or rather explains the original words, which are most literally rendred, *This is every man, or the whole*

whole man is this, or all man is this, by these words, *This is the whole Duty of man.* And indeed the whole duty of every man, all that he is any way obliged to, or concerned for, is to fear GOD and to keep his Commandments. This is what he owes, and all that he owes to his GOD; and to his neighbour, whom GOD commands him to love as he doth himself. And 'tis also what he is strictly obliged to upon his own account, and that duty which every man owes to himself.

Self-preservation is the first and most necessary principle in all animal and sensitive nature; and for higher reasons it is much more so in that nature which is rational, intelligent, and voluntary.

Now Piety or Obedience to GOD, and being upon terms of friendship with him, who is the original of our being, and the author of all good to us, is absolutely necessary, both to the preservation and recovery of man to his primitive state, and also to those farther degrees of perfection and endless felicity which GOD made and design'd man for.

Since then fearing GOD, and keeping his Commandments, is upon so many, upon all accounts imaginable, the only true interest and nearest concern of every man, as we have shown; it must for all the same reasons be the first care and study, and the main affair and employment of every man's whole life here below. And this his due regard to GOD must be his leading, predominant, commanding Principle, that which

which must influence and govern all his aims, and the general course of every man's life and actions, who is wise, and would be happy.

And all these mean transitory things, Riches, Honour, Power, and Rule, &c. must be valued and sought after, and made use of chiefly, and only, so far as they may conduce to the better compassing his great and most important design and business which every man hath here. And that must be (as hath been often said) so to serve and please GOD in this short time of Probation and Trial in this World, that he may reasonably hope to receive in the next the eternal rewards of a good and a faithful servant, with all those good things which GOD hath prepared for them that love him, those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, which neither have nor can enter into the heart of man.

1 Cor. II. 9.

Thus have we now seen how nearly every man is concerned before and above all other things, to fear, and to love, and to obey his Creator; and that true Piety, and a due regard to GOD in all we do, is indeed, in the wise man's emphatical, or full and very significant expression, the whole of man, this is every man, or every man, or all man is this, and no more.

Acts XVII.
24.

This is, i. the great end for which man was made. GOD made all nations of men, that they should seek the Lord, and feel after and find him, who made the World, and all things therein, and who giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.

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It is, 2. the very specific nature, or the peculiar and distinguishing character of man. That capacity for Religion, that *understanding*, and that *will* enabling and enclining man to know in some measure, and then to choose, and to love, and adhere to the sovereign good, as it is that image of and that likeness to GOD, in and after which GOD made man, so is it his highest prerogative, that which more than any other thing differences man from, and raises him above all the visible Creation.

It is also, 3. the highest improvement of his superior and more divine faculties, which are thereby employed in the best manner about their proper objects; and so 'tis the only and certain way for man to be truly happy, *viz.* by his return to, and his being in the nearest conjunction he is capable of here, with that GOD from whom he came, and who made man to be finally and supremely happy in and with himself.

And then certainly, 4. Religion must be upon all these weighty considerations the great, indeed the only valuable business and important affair of every man's life; *The one thing needful*: and all those empty casks, shadows, and false appearances of happiness, which worldly-minded men so foolishly dote on, must be look'd upon as worthless trifles, things of no moment, the impermanencies of life, nay, as *loss* and *dung*, in comparison with the excellency of the knowledge and the service of GOD, and with that happiness to which it leads, both

both in this present life, and in that which is to come.

I have been the more large and particular (to a fault perhaps with some more critical Readers) in explaining, and impressing home these arguments with all the earnestness, strength and clearness I could; because if these general and fundamental truths once took place in the minds of men, by due consideration and reflexion upon the great reasonableness, advantages and necessity of Religion, those who call themselves *Christians*, would be ashamed not to be men at least. They would not then live like beasts that have no understanding, no knowledge of GOD or of themselves, no thought, or foresight, or care of what will be hereafter. They would then make it their business to know, and to live by the Laws of that Religion, by which, as they pretend, they hope to be saved, and would be Christians indeed in despite of all the temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.

And then certainly, if Religion did but upon all these weighty considerations the great, indeed the only valuable business and important affair of every man's life; the one thing needful; and all those empty cakes, shadows, and false appearances of happiness, which worldly-minded men look upon as highly desirable, must be look'd upon as worthless trifles, things of no moment, the vanity of life, nay, as void and blank, in comparison with the excellency of the knowledge and the service of GOD, and with that happiness to which it leads, both

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SUNDAY III.

The great design of the Christian Religion.

A brief History of the progress of revealed Religion from Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and the Prophets, to CHRIST. Of man's original state, and of his fall. Of the increase and progress of Sin after the fall. GOD makes choice of Abraham and his Family, to whom he reveals himself and his will. The Covenant made with them. Not only the rest of mankind, but even the posterity of Abraham, being very much corrupted; GOD sends his only begotten Son into the World to recover fallen man. The great reasonableness, excellency, and many advantages of the Christian Religion.

THE Christian Religion is the way or means appointed by GOD himself for restoring fallen man to his favour, which favour man had forfeited by his disobedience to his Creator; and for his recovering that image of GOD in which he was at first created; GOD thereby giving him a new hope and title to that everlasting happiness for which he at first made man.

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And consequently the great design of the Gospel, that is, of the *good tidings of great joy*, the Angel brought to all people, is to sanctifie our nature, and to save our Souls, or to make us holy here, and happy for ever. 'Tis to instruct and engage us in this way which GOD is pleased to take for reconciling mankind to himself again. Now this GOD doth by pardoning all those Sins men do repent of and forsake; by giving them faith in the Mediator; and by disposing and enabling them to perform that sincere obedience to all his Laws, thro' the assistance of his holy spirit, which he will now accept in and thro' the Son of his Love. *GOD was in Christ, reconciling the World to himself, not imputing their Trespases unto them.*

For our better understanding the grounds or occasion of this merciful dispensation, we are to consider well what the holy Scripture teaches us concerning our original state, and the first formation of man by Almighty GOD; and also concerning man's early revolt and defection from his Maker. Our great Creator was pleased to make our first Parents *in his own image, and after his likeness.* He thus distinguished them from the whole visible Creation, and made them to resemble the excellency and perfection of his own nature, by enduing them with immortal spirits or minds, and with that prerogative of reason and understanding, and that freedom of will or choice, whereby they were made capable of knowing, loving, and obeying the Father

Luke II. 10.

2 Cor. V. 19.

Gen. I. 26.

ther of their Spirits, and the Lord of the Universe; and also were made capable of exercising dominion over those other Creatures which GOD had put under their feet.

Now GOD was pleased, that he might the more deeply imprint upon the minds of our first parents a due sense of their dependence upon him, to try their obedience by a positive and a very easie command or injunction, viz. That they should not eat of the fruit of one particular Tree only, under pain of that Death, which GOD then denounced as an inevitable Punishment of their Rebellion, in case they disobeyed him by their boldly transgressing that preremptory Law of him who was their Lord and King.

But our unhappy Parents forsaking, and withal affronting their Maker, by giving more credit to an apostate, malicious, evil Spirit, than to that holy and true GOD, who could not possibly either be deceived, or deceive, and by their wilful disobedience to an expresse Law, forfeited, together with their innocency, that happy state also and place which his goodness had vouchsafed them.

And thus now poor wretched man having lost the favour of his GOD, and that uprightness in which he was made, and being overwhelmed with guilt, and shame, and sorrow, and fear, runs away, and strives to hide himself from his GOD's all-seeing eye, by whose just award he is condemned to the pains and labours, the

forrows and miseries of this mortal life, and sentenced at last to die, and to return to that dust from whence he was taken.

And since every wilful transgression of any known Law of GOD is such a plain down-right act of rebellion against our sovereign Lord, and so manifest a contempt of his authority, as makes the sinner justly liable to his vengeance, man thereby incurr'd also that eternal Death or Punishment which is the wages of such Sin.

Rom. V. 12. And thus now by one man sin entred into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon (or passed thro'; to, or on) all men, for that all have sinned. By our first parents transgressing that Law GOD gave them, with the penalty of Death annexed, in case of their disobedience, sin first came into the World, and mortality or death, or the wages of sin, seized not upon Adam only, but upon all meer men who descended from him. Because all were sinners, that is, born after the image and likeness of sinful Adam, who is said to have begotten a Son in his own likeness, and after his image, or in his image, who had himself now, by his apostacy and rebellion, forfeited the favour of GOD, which was his only true happiness; and defaced that primitive image of GOD, which was his excellency and his glory.

And consequently hereto, we find in the history of the first ages of the World, the very great increase and triumphs of Sin and of Death. Cain, the first born of Adam, out of malice and envy, murders

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ders his brother *Abel*, and is condemned Gen. IV. 11,
by GOD to be a *fugitive and a vagabond* ^{12.}
in the Earth. And when men began to
multiply on the face of the earth, their
transgressions and death, the wages of them,
multiplied too, in proportion to their
greater numbers. *And GOD saw that the* Gen. VI. 5.
wickedness of man was great. And the earth Ver. 11.
also was corrupt before GOD, and the earth
was fill'd with violence.

Whereupon GOD was pleased to bring
a flood of waters upon the earth, and
about sixteen hundred and fifty six years
after the Creation, to destroy all flesh
from under Heaven. *So that every thing*
that was in the earth died, save Noah only
and his wife, and his three sons, and
their wives, and save all those living Crea-
tures which, by GOD's order, went in
unto Noah, into that Ark which GOD
had commanded him to make: For him,
and his family, only GOD saw to be righte-
ous before him in that Generation.

And in the very next ages after the
flood, when men began again to multiply
on the face of the earth, we find that the
knowledge and worship of the true GOD
was soon lost among the posterity, not of
Cham only, but even of *Shem* too; who
lived almost to the end of the life of *Abra-*
ham. For in his days, Idolatry prevailed,
and spread it self all over the earth. And
with this corruption of worship, and upon
mens forsaking the true GOD and his fear,
all manner of wickedness, injustice, vio-
lence, oppression, and impurity, like a tor-
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rent, over-ran the whole inhabited World.

That carnal mind, or natural vicious inclination to comply with inordinate bodily appetites, sensual pleasures, and unreasonable passions, and to place their happiness in sensible objects, and gratifying the bare animal life, which all men draw from their sinful Parents, in whose image they are begotten, seem'd utterly to have defaced and worn out that image of GOD in which *Adam* was created, in those very early ages of the World.

For that almost universal prevalency of the most stupid idolatry, and of all impiety, as well as injustice and oppression, and all other wickedness and villany, plainly shew'd men to have lost all knowledge and fear of GOD their Creator, and all sense of any relation they had to him, or dependence upon him for happiness; which they vainly hoped to find in these earthly things. Men lived generally without any regard had to those superior faculties which GOD had given them, in order to their seeking after him, and their knowing and serving him, and resembling him in this life, and being thus prepared for that everlasting felicity which he designed men for in the life to come.

In this deplorable state of mankind, when idolatry and all manner of wickedness had got such head and strength, and such credit almost all over the earth, GOD was pleased to make choice of *Abraham*, and of his family, in which the knowledge and worship of the Creator should be al-

way

way preserved. And his descendants, the children of *Israel*, GOD was pleased to own, and visibly to take care of, to protect and bless, and as it were to set them forth as a standing monument and demonstration of his providence and government of the World, at least in those ages and places.

This people therefore GOD was pleased, after a certain term of years, according to a promise he had made to their forefathers, to bring out of the house of bondage, out of the land of *Egypt*, with a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm, with great wonders and signs which he shew'd upon *Pharaoh*, and all his host, who were drowned in the red Sea.

And with this people GOD made a Covenant in *Horeb*, viz. That they should keep those Commandments which GOD gave to them in the Mount, out of the midst of the fire; which he also wrote on two tables of stone, called the *tables* Deut. IX. 9. of the covenant which the Lord made with them; Which Book of the Covenant when *Moses* read in the audience of all the people, Exod. XXIV. they said, All that the Lord hath said we will do, and be obedient. And GOD also promises, that if they will obey his voice, and keep (this) his Covenant, then they shall be a peculiar treasure to him above all people. And Exod. XIX. again, if ye walk in my statutes, and keep my Levit. XXVI. Commandments, saith the Lord, and do them, I will walk among you, and I will be your Ver. 12. GOD, and ye shall be my people.

Notwithstanding all which so solemn engagements, we find it recorded of the ve-

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ry next generation which succeeded *Joshua*, and those elders which outlived him, Judg. II. 12. and who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel, that they forsook the Lord GOD of their fathers which brought them out of the Land of Egypt, and served Baalim and Ashtaroath, and provoked the Lord to anger.

And from these early days of the Judges, all along till both *Israel* and *Judah* were carried into captivity, we find both the Princes, and Priests, and People, charged with forsaking GOD's Covenant, and doing evil in his sight, not only by committing the grossest idolatry, sacrificing their sons and their daughters to devils, making them to pass thro' the fire to *Moloch*; but also with all manner of impiety, hypocrisie, injustice, oppression, sensuality, and uncleanness; with all, or many of which crimes the Jewish Nation stands frequently charged in holy writ for those 900 years, which pass'd between their coming out of Egypt, and the destruction of *Solomon's Temple*.

And altho' we find no mention of their idolatry in those days in which our Saviour lived in that nation, yet he frequently convinced those who pretended to the highest pitch of Piety and Holiness among them, viz. the Scribes and Pharisees, of Pride and Hypocrisie, of devouring Widows Houses, of Covetousness, of Extortion and Excess, and of shutting up the Kingdom of Heaven against other men, Mat. XXIII. and of omitting the weightier matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Truth, and of placing

placing their Religion chiefly in outward ceremonies and traditions of their own.

Thus we see that neither those revelations GOD was pleased to make of himself to the Patriarchs, either before, or after the Flood; nor yet that first or old Covenant which he made with the children of *Israel* at *Horeb*, was sufficient to preserve, or at any time to retrieve and re-establish the true Religion, even in that particular Nation and corner of the World. And this dispensation of GOD's providence was besides altogether unknown, and so of no use or advantage to almost all the rest of mankind, who yet were also originally made in GOD's own image, and so were made capable too both of knowing and serving him here, and of being happy with him for ever.

Almighty GOD, who is *the GOD of the Spirits of all flesh*, had indeed promised a Redeemer and a Saviour to all mankind, (who was also typified by *Moses*, and by *Joshua*) more obscurely to the Patriarchs before the Law; and under the Law, more expressly and plainly by *Moses*; and yet more plainly by the following Prophets. And this Saviour was to be the *Mediator* Heb. VIII. 6, 10, 11. of a new and a better Covenant, established upon better promises.

Now this new Covenant is expressed in these words; that GOD will put his Laws into the minds of that his people, and will write them in (or on) their hearts, that they shall all know the Lord, from the least to the greatest, and that GOD will be merciful to their

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unrighteousness, and will no more remember their sins and their iniquities. --- And that he will be to them a G O D, and they shall be to him a People.

Jer. XXXI.
31, &c.

Rom. IX, 6,
7.

Gal. III. 7.

This promise is indeed quoted by the writer to the Hebrews from Jeremiah, where we read it thus prefaced, *Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah.* Now we know that the house of Israel and the house of Judah are in this evangelical prophecy put to signify the universal Church of the Messias, from the time of his coming, to the end of the World. For as St. Paul saith, *They are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither because they are of the seed of Abraham, are they all children:* So on the other side, the same Apostle tells us, *that they which are of faith, that is, they who believe and obey the Gospel of CHRIST, as Abraham believed and obeyed GOD, the same are the Children of Abraham.*

Thus have we now taken a brief survey of the general state of mankind, as far as the holy Scripture informs us, with reference both to the rise and progress, and great decay both of natural and of revealed Religion; and of that idolatry, or false worship in particular, and that horrid impiety and immorality which so generally prevail'd, even in that nation which GOD had made himself known to, by so many ways, and at so many times, for about four thousand years from the first Creation of the World to the coming of the Mes-

Messiah. And we find by this account, that not only the whole Gentile or Pagan World, to which the Jews and their narrow limits bore so small a proportion, but even that posterity of *Abraham* which GOD had chosen out of all the families of the earth to be his peculiar people, that they also, in all ages, forsook that GOD who had done such great things for them, and had made his power to be so visibly known among them, and that they very frequently provoked him to jealousy, with the sins which they committed, doing according to all the abominations of those nations which the Lord had cast out before them, and this too, even in that very City of *Jerusalem*, which the Lord had chose out of all the tribes of *Israel*, to put his name there. 1 King. XIV. 21.

So sinful and so miserable was the condition of mankind, so universally, and so horribly corrupted for so many succeeding generations. Men were generally sunk so far below the dignity of their nature, as they are reasonable Creatures, that they wholly forsook that GOD who made them for himself, and worship'd Gods which themselves had made, Idols of Wood and Stone; and sacrificed their sons and daughters unto Devils. And they were for this reason forsaken by GOD, and given over to a reprobate mind and vile affections; so as to work all manner of wickedness with greediness.

Now these reflexions will serve to instruct us, as in the occasion, necessity, or at least the wonderful expediency and advantages:

tages: So also in the great design and end of the Christian Religion. This new and more perfect Revelation GOD was pleased to make of himself to the World, by sending his Son JESUS CHRIST to be the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind, out of that more than *Egyptian* Bondage, into which they had brought themselves to Sin and to Satan, and consequently they had thereby made themselves obnoxious to the judgment of GOD, and Death eternal.

- John III. 17. For GOD, in the fulness of time, when it seemed best to him, sent his Son into the World, that the World thro' him might be saved. Our blessed Lord came to save all who believe and obey him, from the power and guilt of sin, and from that death and condemnation to which all the sons of Adam were subject. For as it was before
- 1 Cor. XV. 21, 22. observed, since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all died, even so in CHRIST shall all be made alive. And again, our Saviour
- 2 Tim. I. 10. hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

And thus we see, that the Religion taught by our Saviour CHRIST is the last and sovereign remedy which the wisdom of GOD hath thought fit to employ for the recovery of lost man to that duty and allegiance he owes to his Creator, and to the right use of those divine and nobler faculties which GOD was pleased to honour him with, and to a sure way of attaining to that endless happiness for which GOD made him at the first,

Now

Now the Christian Religion, being that Revelation which GOD was pleased to make of himself by his Son, hath many and great advantages above all those Revelations which he had made in former ages, unto the fathers by the Prophets. For our Lord is styled, as was above observed, *the Mediator of a better, or a new* Heb. VIII. 6. *Covenant, which was established upon better Promises, than that first or old Covenant, which GOD made with the House of Israel, when he led them out of the Land of Egypt.*

For whereas in the Law of *Moses*, there was no place left for repentance in the case of wilful and notorious crimes, but the *Soul that sinneth it must die*; our blessed Lord came to call Sinners to repentance. And in the new Covenant, made in, and sealed with the Blood of CHRIST, shed for the remission of sins, GOD promises, that *he will be merciful to their unrighteousness* who repent, and believe, and obey the Gospel of his Son; and *that he will remember their* Heb. VIII. *sins and their iniquities no more.* 12.

We ought also farther to consider, that this grace of the Gospel, or new Covenant, is the plainest demonstration of GOD's astonishing love to mankind, and the greatest possible obligation laid upon us carefully to comply with those two great and comprehensive duties, of loving GOD above all things, and of loving our brethren, for his sake, and out of obedience to him, as we do our selves; and thus to live here to him, with whom we hope to live in a state

state of perfect happiness for ever. We should often remember, that our Religion is enforced upon us by the most irresistible arguments to all considering men, *viz.* Happiness or Misery, both now inconceivable, and both of them endless, to be enjoyed or undergone by us, according as we chuse to demean our selves here in this short span of life.

And that if we chuse life and happiness in the ways of Wisdom, of Piety, and of Holiness; we are assured of the constant assistance of GOD's holy spirit, upon our earnestly desiring it, and making the best use of that grace which he gives us.

We should consider that all those things which we are commanded to do by our Law-giver, are most agreeable to the reason of our minds, perfective of our nature, and not only conducive, but necessary to our true and greatest happiness, both in this and in the next life.

For this divine institution doth, more than any other ever did, or can do, recover, improve, and perfect those godlike and nobler faculties or powers by which GOD was pleased to distinguish man from, and to exalt him above all the whole visible Creation, when he made man in his own image, and after his own likeness: Which prerogative, advantage, and capacity for the true happiness of man, hath been so often mentioned, because it ought to be at no time forgotten by us.

This our holy Religion enlightens our minds, informs and rectifies our judgment, which

which is the eye of the rational Soul, making us clearly to discern what is of greatest moment to us, and where our true and our biggest interest lies.

It also directs and enclines the will towards its proper object, and our only true center of happiness, viz. that GOD who having made man for himself hath placed man's chief good or final happiness in the knowledge, and love, and service of his great Creator; and in his due attendance and dependence upon him in this life; and then in those now unconceivable manifestations and communications of his goodness, which are reserv'd for all his faithful servants in that life which is to come.

And consequently heretofore, the Christian Religion, if well understood, almost irresistibly determines the whole man to the wise choice, and to the constant and earnest pursuit of all those ways and those means which lead to that blessed end.

And thus the Christian Religion in its own nature enobles our Souls, and raises our affections our thoughts and desires, from these low, mean, perishing objects, and those sordid pleasures which are common to us with the brute beasts, to things spiritual and eternal; from the dust of Earth to the highest Heaven; and from the Creature to the great Creator and Lord of the Universe. *It purifies our hearts by faith,* refines our spirits, betters our tempers, enlarges our capacities, renews and sanctifies our natures, and makes us such holy temples as GOD and CHRIST will

will vouchsafe to dwell in by the spirit, that spirit of wisdom and holiness.

And our living up to the demands of our holy profession entitles us most assuredly to the especial favour and love, to the protection and guidance of that GOD, whose we are now, as well by the free choice and consent of our minds, and by the adoption of his grace in CHRIST JESUS, as by our first Creation, and that natural homage which is due for our being rational and intelligent Creatures.

Farther yet, our holy Religion, not only delivers us from the guilt and punishment of those sins and transgressions of GOD's Law, which we have repented of and have forsaken; but it frees us likewise by the aids of his spirit from the dominion and power of sin and of Satan; and so too, from all fear of death and of Hell. Whence it cannot but give us such a solid consolation, and such a peaceful calm of mind, as nothing in this lower World can equal in any degree, and such as none can ever take from us.

And to crown all, it is this holy Religion, and this alone, which can certainly direct us to, fit us for, and infallibly assure us of that everlasting felicity and enjoyment of the sovereign Good to eternal ages, for which GOD designed man in the day of his Creation.

For of this happiness we are now again made capable, and are entitled to it, by the redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS; in

Eph. II. 10. *whom we are created (again) unto good works, which*

which GOD had before ordained that we should walk in them.

So that, to conclude this head, the Christian Religion, rightly understood and duly practised, is the only, and withal, an infallible way for a man to be as happy in this life as this mortal state can bear, and to be happy for ever in that endless state which is on the other side of the grave: And without the knowledge and due practice of this Religion, 'tis wholly impossible that we can be truly happy, or enjoy that felicity which Almighty GOD made us capable of, and fitted and designed us for, either here or hereafter.

These are the great advantages and Privileges of the Gospel of our blessed Saviour. And for that reason they ought to be deeply imprinted upon our minds, and frequently considered by us, that so they may influence, direct and govern all our deliberate designs and actions, and may the better fix our resolutions, and excite, quicken, and invigorate our daily endeavours after that universal holiness which the Gospel requires, and that happiness it promises to all who in earnest believe in, and constantly obey the Laws of the Son of God.

S U N

SUNDAY IV.

Of the truth and certainty of the Christian Religion. This proved from the fulfilling of the ancient Prophecies; from the miracles wrought by CHRIST, and by his Apostles; from the voice from Heaven; from the divine nature and intrinsic excellency of this Religion; from its tendency to promote the Glory of GOD, and the Happiness of man, both present and future; and from its marvellous success in the World by such unlikely means. The Testimony of the Apostles and Evangelists unexceptionable. The truth of the history of the Gospel proved.

NOW since our Religion is of so great consequence to us, so much our interest, and so necessary to our happiness, as we have above proved, we ought to be very well assured, as of the necessity and mighty advantages, so also of the infallible certainty of that on which we lay so great a stress, and which we build so much upon.

And that the Christian Religion is most true and certain, may be undeniably proved from that attestation or witness which GOD himself was pleased to give there- to in several manners. As for example, by causing those ancient Prophecies to be

re-

recorded which concern the divine person, the incarnation, the birth, the life, the death and resurrection from the dead, and the visible ascension of our blessed Lord into heaven; which being published so many ages before CHRIST's coming into the World, were all of them so punctually fulfilled in him, and in no other.

GOD also gave farther witness to the truth of Christianity by those many and great miracles which, far exceeding the power of all natural agents, were wrought by CHRIST himself, and by his Apostles, and his other Disciples in his name, and in confirmation, as they all professed openly, that this JESUS of Nazareth, was the Son of GOD, and that Messias who was promised to the Fathers, and who was to be the Redeemer, and the Saviour of all who should believe on him, and obey him.

And lastly, GOD owned our Saviour to be his Son, and consequently avouched the truth of his Doctrine, and of that Religion which he came to set up and establish in the World, no less than three several times by an audible voice from Heaven. Once, immediately after his Baptism, thus recorded by St. Matthew, And JESUS, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: And lo, the Heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of GOD descending like a Dove, and lighting upon him: And lo, a Voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Matt. III. 16, 17.

And again, at our Saviour's Transfiguration. *And behold, saith the same Evangelist, a bright Cloud overshadowed them: And behold, a voice out of the Cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.*

Matt. XVII.
5.

And again, when our Lord had prayed in the audience of his Disciples and others, in those words, *Father, glorifie thy name; then came there a voice from Heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorifie it again.* On which occasion, when the people that stood by and heard it, said, *that it thundered,* and others said, *that an Angel spake to him;* JESUS answered and said, *This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes,* viz. as an evident demonstration to those who heard it, that he was the SON of GOD.

John XII. 28.

Besides which undeniable proofs, the divine and heavenly nature of the Christian Religion, whether we consider its aim and design, or its effects and properties, is a farther demonstration of its coming from GOD, and by consequence of its truth and certainty.

That Religion must needs come from GOD, which so manifestly tends to, and promotes the honour and glory of GOD, in recovering and restoring that image of his in which he made man, and in setting up his kingdom in the hearts and lives of all men, by their obeying those laws of CHRIST which are a transcript of the divine perfections.

That

That Religion must certainly come from GOD, which is so agreeable to his nature and will, all whose doctrines, and Precepts, and encouragements, are so worthy of GOD. And which withal so evidently tends to, and establisheth the true welfare and happiness of man, who is his Offspring and Favourite-Creature, in the whole extent of his being and duration.

For this Religion, as was before represented, provides for and promotes the happiness of every man in all his capacities, relations and circumstances of life. It exalts, refines, and perfects his superior and nobler faculties or powers of understanding and will, by directing them to, employing them about, and fixing them upon their proper object, that GOD which made them for himself, that man might know, and love, and serve his Creator.

It promotes and secures man's present welfare, by putting him upon the study and practice of all moral virtues and christian graces; such as are true Piety, Wisdom, and Holiness, Temperance, Meekness, and Humility, Justice, and Charity. And this good management of himself, in all points, cannot but produce in man peace of conscience, and an inward settled tranquillity of mind here, and a joyful and firm expectation of endless happiness hereafter.

And then yet farther, as to civil society, and the good order and government of the World, and those mutual assistances and advantages which men give to, and

receive from each other, in their political or social capacities, 'tis manifest, that the Christian Religion, rightly understood and complied with, makes the best Governours, and the best Subjects, the best Parents and Children, the best Husbands and Wives, the best Servants and Masters.

All which must needs be so, since the great indispensable rule and settled measure of this institution is, to do all the good we can to all men, as we have opportunity and obligation, which we desire they should do to us in the like case and relation; and never to do any thing to any person which we should take it ill to have him do to us, were we in his circumstances and he in ours.

Thus have we shewn, that the transcendent excellency of the Christian Religion, its general design, aim, and tendency, and all those proper ways and means it proposes for the compassing its great and noble ends, viz the promoting the honour of Almighty GOD, and the greatest Good of mankind, is a clear evidence or demonstration of its truth and divine original; and that it doth most certainly come from GOD, who is the author of all good to his Creatures, as well as it leads to, and finally centers in that GOD who made man for himself, and for holiness and happiness, in his return to, and conjunction with his Creator.

Another proof of the truth and divine power of the Christian Religion, and that it came from, and was owned by GOD,

may

may be taken from that confessedly miraculous success it had in spreading it self throughout the whole World in so short a time. And this will be the more evident, if we consider either the nature of the Religion it self, or the great disadvantages, and apparent incompetency of the first preachers of it for so great and so hard an undertaking.

This Religion, so far as it was properly Christian, was wholly new, and so contrary to the education and prejudices arising from thence, and to the received notions and customs both of the *Jews* and of the *Gentiles*. It was scorn'd and contradicted by the generality of the great, wise and learned men of the whole World.

It taught men those harsh and unwelcome doctrines of mortification and self-denial, forsaking all they had, and taking up the Cross, that is, suffering all hardships, and losing even their lives for the sake of one, whom they who preached it confessed to have been himself put to a shameful Death upon the Cross by his prevailing enemies.

It taught men to contain and to fly from all inordinate sensual Pleasures, all eager pursuit of Riches and Honours, and all other the great idols of worldly-minded men. And it taught them to expect all their reward for such their forbearances, and for such their pains and their sufferings, only in another and a future state; and this too only upon the promises and credit of a person who was by them

1 Cor. I. 23.

styled the Saviour of the World, and avouched to be the Son of GOD, and yet did not save himself from the most cruel and ignominious death. The preaching of *CHRIST crucified*, a Saviour who did not save himself, was to the Jews a *stumbling block*, and to the Greeks *foolishness*.

And it may be farther considered, that the first Preachers of the Gospel were poor, mean, illiterate, despicable men, who had not only no secular authority, no arms, no power, but no arts, no learning, no skill in persuading, otherwise than by the divine attestation of those real undeniable miracles which were wrought by them in confirmation of Christ's Resurrection, and of his having given them this power.

And yet this so new, so incredible, so unpromising a doctrine, and so disagreeable and contrary to the lusts, and interests, and prejudices of the great and wise men of the world, in a few years overcame all opposition, all the power of men and devils, and all the false wisdom of the pretending Sages, and overspread the whole World; which in a very short time after owned this crucified JESUS to be Son of the most high GOD, and did homage to him, as to their Lord, their Redeemer, and their Judge.

But to make the truth and certainty of the Christian Religion appear still more evident, and more incontestable, it may be useful briefly to consider that weight and authority which those persons who

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delivered down to us the history of the Life, and Miracles, and Doctrine of our blessed Lord, and those Writings in which they delivered them, always had, and for the highest reasons still ought to have with all sober and considering men.

Now to put this matter past all doubt, we shall prove, that the original witnesses to those matters of fact were as competent, as credible, and as unexceptionable, as any witnesses ever were or can be to any thing which any man believes upon the testimony of another.

And then we shall shew, that we have much more reason to be sure that this was their testimony, and that the records, which are brought down to us from those ages in which they lived, are the very same books which they left, and were written by those very persons whose names they bear, than we can possibly have to be sure of any other thing of that nature, or of any part or single passage in any history that ever was written by any person, in any age or place in the whole World.

As to the Writers themselves, it plainly appears, that they had sufficient knowledge, and all the greatest assurance that could possibly be given of the truth of those matters which they do attest, and so they themselves could not be deceived therein. And they also gave the greatest proof of their being men of such unshaken, invincible Honesty and Integrity, that nothing could tempt

tempt them to falsify and impose upon others.

St. *Matthew*, and St. *John*, and the rest of the Apostles, were all-along eye-witnesses of all that they assert concerning the Life and Miracles of our Lord, who themselves personally, as they frequently declare, accompanied him all the time of his publick preaching, and they penned those discourses which they had heard from him with their own ears. They conversed, eat, and drank with him at several times, in those forty days which he continued on Earth after his Resurrection, and they beheld him with their Eyes when he was taken up into Heaven.

And St. *Mark* and St. *Luke*, if they were not of the number of those other Disciples who conversed personally with our Lord in his being here in the flesh, (as many think they were) yet by being constant companions of, and attendants, one of them on St. *Peter* (by whose order and direction St. *Mark* is very probably thought to have written his Gospel,) and the other on St. *Paul*, to whom our Saviour appeared at his miraculous Conversion, and by their frequent conversing with those persons who were eye-witnesses of all those transactions they report, they both of them had most certain means of being exactly informed in all the particulars they relate.

Now St. *Matthew* wrote his Gospel about eight years after the Ascension of our Lord; and St. *Mark* wrote his only eleven years after it. St. *John* penned his Gospel

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about thirty two years after our Lord's Ascension, as appears from ancient manuscripts, long extant in some of the most primitive Churches, and the testimony of *Eusebius*. And *Eusebius* farther adds, from the tradition of the two or three foregoing ages, that St. *John* did also give his own testimony to the truth of the other three Gospels, written by St. *Matthew*, St. *Mark*, and St. *Luke*.

And this Apostle and Evangelist St. *John* asserts the truth of what both he and they had written in the most express terms imaginable, *That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life; That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you.* John I. 1, 3.

And then as to the honesty and integrity of these writers, there is not the least ground for any suspicion that they should attempt to deceive the World in such their relations. This appears from the nature and fundamental Laws of that Religion which they endeavoured to propagate, which most strictly forbids all fraud, and threatens eternal punishment to all those who are guilty of lying, deceit, and imposture of any kind.

And this appears yet farther from their having related many things which seem to reflect very disadvantageously both upon their master, and upon the chief of his followers, and even upon their own selves also. St. *Matthew* owns himself to have been a Publican, which was a profession then

then most ignominious and abhorr'd among the *Jews*; and that the other Disciples of CHRIST were poor Fishermen.

Matt. XXVI. 35. St. *Matthew* also confesses, that not St. *Peter* only, but that he himself too, and all the rest of CHRIST's Disciples, altho' they had all promised with St. *Peter*, that tho' they should die with him, they would not deny him, yet as soon as he was apprehended by the Officers of the chief Priests,

Ver. 56.

they all forsook him and fled. And all the Evangelists unanimously agree, that that JESUS whom they so constantly affirmed to be the Son of the most high GOD, to be the promised *Messias*, and the Saviour of the World, was himself taken, and scourged, and mock'd, and crucified, and slain by those who were his enemies.

And after all, these same persons gave the last and most convincing evidence and demonstration of their sincerity, in that they so willingly sealed to the truth of what they affirmed, by laying down their lives, and suffering the most cruel torments, in justification of what they had so publickly taught.

For if they themselves did believe what they preached to others, 'tis impossible they should defend that Religion with falsehood and lies, which so severely condemns, and punishes those proceedings with eternal death; and if they were not thoroughly possess'd with a full persuasion of its truth, and of the certainty of those great rewards it promises to those who openly profess it, and lay down their lives in wit-

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ness thereto, 'tis as impossible that any men in their wits should invent, and persist to the death in the affirmation of such things as could yeild them no other fruit than scorn and contempt, scourgings, imprisonment, and persecutions of all sorts in their life time, and bring them at last to the most exquisite pains and tormenting deaths, the malice of Men or Devils could possibly invent.

And now *lastly*, that the History, and Doctrine, and Precepts, &c. of our blessed Lord thus faithfully related, thus undeniably attested by witnesses so unquestionable, both for their certain knowledge of those matters, and for their known integrity, tried to the last extremity, are come down to us with the same certainty in the holy Scriptures of the new Testament, or that those books were written by those same persons whose names they bear, we have these undeniable arguments, *viz.*

That as no books ever were of such vast moment and concern to mankind, so none ever were, either so publickly known and read, or so frequently and carefully copied out from the Originals, and from them translated into all languages, and so generally dispers'd over all the Earth.

No books were ever so thoroughly examined, and so punctually compared with the Originals whence the copies were taken; none were ever so industriously preserv'd as these, which descending to us from the Apostles and the immediate Disciples of our Lord, have always been look'd upon and

and most warily guarded by the whole Church of CHRIST, in all places, as her peculiar and most invaluable treasure.

Insomuch that many thousands of the primitive Christians were ready to lose their lives, and many of them did chuse rather to die the most painful death, than to deliver up their Bibles to their Pagan persecutors. And those whose fears prevailed upon them so far as to part with them, were stiled and accounted infamous traitors; and hardly obtain'd the peace of the Church upon their most serious and hearty repentance, till the last moment of their lives.

So that now upon the whole matter we have very much more reason to believe the books of the new Testament (as well as those of the old Testament, whose authority is established by their being cited in the new one) to have been written by those whose names they bear, and to be that very same word of GOD which they professed to deliver down to Posterity, than we have, or can have, to believe any other book, said to have been written by any ancient author, to be his, whom all men allow to have written it, and of which no man ever doubted.

Nor can it be reasonably imagined, that the Providence of GOD should not be concerned in an especial manner for the preservation of and perpetuating such books, as were both endited by his holy Spirit, and are also the great standing instrument or means of propagating the Gospel of his

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Son, and that gracious design which GOD had therein to advance his own Glory, and the greatest good of mankind; for whose sake he was pleased to send his beloved Son into the World, to do and to suffer such great and extraordinary things, in order to their reconciliation with himself, and their recovery from a state of sin and misery.

Since therefore we have such irrefragable arguments to assure us that the holy Scripture is the word of GOD, and that we are therein taught to know and to do all that he requires of us in order to our everlasting happiness, 'tis evident that we ought to value these divine Records above all the books in the World.

'Tis evident also, that we ought to read and consider them frequently and seriously, and to meditate upon them day and night, with an humble, teachable, and thankful heart; and above all, with a sincere purpose, and daily care and endeavour to perform all that we there learn to be the will of our heavenly Father, our Saviour, our King, our Lord, and our Judge.

For we must make these holy books not only the standard of our faith, but likewise the rule and measure of all our designs and aims, of our general conduct, and of all our deliberate particular actions, that is, of our whole lives and conversations. These, and these alone, rightly understood, and constantly attended to, are able to make us *2 Tim. III. wise unto Salvation, thro' faith which is in 15.*

CHRIST JESUS.

SUNDAY

SUNDAY V.

Of the nature and first principles of the Christian Religion. That it is the most perfect way of worshiping GOD thus now revealed to us. What it is to know GOD, and JESUS CHRIST sent by him. A short Abstract of the Christian Religion. The two most general duties, Faith and Repentance. The character and effects of a true, justifying, saving Faith. A slight customary assent, without due consideration or thought about the principles and duties of Religion, a general cause of irreligion, and of the infidel scandalous lives of false professors.

THE Christian Religion is that way of worshiping and serving GOD the Creator, in and thro' his only begotten Son, the Redeemer, which we are taught by him, and his holy Spirit, in the inspired writings of his Apostles and Disciples; or more briefly, it is the knowledge of the one only true GOD, as he is now revealed to us by our Lord JESUS CHRIST in his Gospel.

This institution then is the most perfect manner of our serving GOD, who hath been pleased to afford us Christians these far-

farther manifestations of his amazing love to us, by sending his Son to instruct us in his nature and in his will, and to procure for us pardon of all our Sins, and eternal life.

And this way of worshiping GOD in and by CHRIST, hath been conveyed down to us, thro' all succeeding generations in the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles of our Lord, who were inspired by the Holy Ghost; which records of theirs have been preserv'd with the utmost care and diligence in all Christian Churches, as their most peculiar and invaluable treasure, dearer to them than their very lives were.

It ought therefore to be the first care and study of every one, who is baptized into this holy Religion, and who hopes to be saved by it, to get himself thoroughly informed, as soon as he comes to the use of his reason, in the design and end, and in the nature and laws thereof; and then to make it the chief business of his whole life, to govern himself by these precepts of our Lord, in order to obtain that eternal life, which is indeed the great promise of the Gospel, but is made to those only who believe, and obey it too.

Now this our Religion teaches and obliges us to know the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom he sent into the World for this very purpose, that the World, thro' him, might be saved, or, that whosoever believeth on him might have everlasting life.

This is life eternal, saith our Lord, that

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John XVII. *they might know thee the only true GOD, and*
 3. *JESUS CHRIST whom Thou hast sent.* This

is the only and sure way, or means, and this is all that is required to make us truly happy for ever, to know, and to serve, and to obey GOD, and JESUS CHRIST, as we are taught in the Gospel.

Or to speak somewhat more fully, the Christian Religion designs to teach, and obliges us to know, that is, to be inwardly persuaded, from due consideration, and frequent and serious thoughts, of the Being or Existence of the one only true GOD, who is the Creator, the Preserver, and the Governour of the Universe. It obliges us to own, and to confess him upon all just occasions, to fear, love, worship, and to obey him, and trust in him, as our Lord and Father.

It obliges us also to believe, that GOD was pleased, out of his tender compassion and love to mankind, to send his eternal only begotten Son JESUS CHRIST into the World, to take our nature upon him, and by his suffering death for us, and in our stead, to obtain for us the remission of all those Sins which we do repent of and forsake; to procure for us the assistance of the holy Spirit, to enable us to know and to do his will; and after all, to bring us to that eternal life which he hath purchased for, and promised to all those who believe and obey him.

And here it may be proper and useful to lay down a more general account or summary of the whole Christian Religion

as we are taught it by our Lord himself, and by his Apostles and Evangelists in the books of the new Testament.

Our blessed Lord, as we read in the Gospel, promises these three things to us in his Father's name, viz. 1st, The pardon of all those Sins which we do truly repent of and forsake, by faith in his mediation, and by virtue of that new Covenant which was made in his blood shed for the remission of Sins. 2^{dly}, He promises us the guidance and assistance of his holy Spirit, to lead us into all truth necessary to be known, and to enable us to perform all that sincere obedience GOD now requires of us, in order to our salvation. And 3^{dly}, he promises that eternal life, or the inheritance of that kingdom which GOD hath prepared for those to whom CHRIST our Lord gave the Power (or the right or privilege, as we read in our margin) *to become the Sons of GOD, even to those who so believe on his* John I. 12. *name* as that they obey all his Laws, and receive him for their Priest, and their Prophet, and their King.

And to make us capable of these great blessings which our Lord hath purchased for us, there are two general duties required of us, viz. *Faith* and *Repentance*.

Faith imports a deliberate, firm, undoubted assent to all that CHRIST taught and affirmed, promised, or threatned. And this *Faith* often refers in particular to that great foundation of our Religion which it necessarily supposes, viz. That we do firmly believe, that there is one only infinite,

supreme Being, the Creator, Preserver, and Governour of the Universe, and that JESUS CHRIST is that eternal Son of the most high GOD, who was sent by him to be the Saviour of the World, and who is appointed to be the Judge of all men at the last day.

A. XI. 18.

Repentance unto life imports such a deep inward sense of, and hearty sorrow for our past Sins, as makes us not only earnestly implore GOD's pardon for them, thro' the intercession of our Saviour, but puts us instantly upon a new and a better course of life.

And thus now this Gospel-Repentance teaches and obliges us immediately, and for ever, to forsake and to avoid, with our utmost care and diligence, all ungodliness or profaneness, or all neglect, or slight performance of the daily worship of GOD; all worldly Lusts, that is, all over-eager or sinful desires of, and pursuit after Riches, Honours, or sensual Pleasures; all Pride and Hypocrisie; and all inordinate self-love and self-conceit, all impurity and intemperance in any kind; all injustice, unmercifulness, cruelty, and oppression; all Malice, envy, evil-speaking, and uncharitable censuring of others.

In short, we do then only *repent* and *believe* the Gospel in earnest, and to any good purpose, when loving GOD above all things, and loving our neighbours as we do our selves, we make it our chief and daily care to live soberly, righteously, and godly. When we demean our selves in all things,

things, as those who are always looking for *Tit. II. 12,* that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of *13, 14.* the great GOD, and our Saviour JESUS CHRIST; when we live every day as those whom he hath redeemed from all iniquity, and purified unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. For thus St. Paul truly describes the Gospel-state.

Having thus now given a more general and brief account of the end and design, the nature and tendency of the Christian Religion, and shewn both what it promises to us, and what it requires from us; we come next to consider more particularly what are those things wherein it principally consists, and what it obliges us to, in order to our obtaining that great blessedness which it propounds to those who embrace it, and live up to its demands.

Now this knowledge of GOD and of CHRIST, which is eternal life, that is, which leads to eternal life, or entitles us thereto, requires of us in the first place two general things, which comprehend the whole of what we are obliged to thereby.

And these are, as was above hinted, *Faith and Repentance*; or such a belief of the Doctrines of the Gospel, and such an entire forsaking of all sinful courses whatever, as engage us in a constant care and endeavour to conform our hearts and our whole lives to the laws of that kingdom of GOD, which our blessed Lord came to set up in the World. *The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of GOD is at hand,* saith our

Mark I. 15. Lord at his first preaching, *repent ye, and believe the Gospel.* Faith and that Repentance which includes new obedience are then, we see, the two parts which complete our Religion.

To be sincere and true Disciples of CHRIST then we must first *believe*; and, in order thereto, we must *duly consider* and learn to know what our Saviour taught, requires, promises, and threatens; for all the great *Truths and Doctrines* of the Gospel; and then we must constantly and faithfully endeavour to do all that he hath commanded us.

We must therefore take great care, as soon as we are capable, to be fully informed in the true meaning, and to be thoroughly persuaded of the infallible certainty and vast importance of all those truths which are delivered to us by our Lord, and by his Disciples in the holy Scriptures.

Our Faith must be founded on this sure bottom, that what we thus believe is contained in, and is conformable to those revelations which came from GOD, who can neither be deceived himself, nor can deceive others.

And all those truths, relating to matter of fact, delivered down to us by our Lord's Apostles, we are to believe as steadfastly, as if we our selves had seen them with our own eyes, as his Disciples did see with their eyes, those many miracles wrought by him, and particularly that of his being raised again from the dead, and his ascension into Heaven, by which he

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was declared or demonstrated to be the Son of GOD with power. Rom. I. 4.

For thus our Saviour expressly affirms, upon occasion of Thomas's not believing his resurrection, till he had seen the wounds in his hands and in his side. *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* That is, they are blessed who are as firmly persuaded of the truth of these things, as if they themselves had been eye-witness to such plain and evident matters of fact, and who lead their lives accordingly, and as upon a full persuasion of the truth of these things. John XX. 29

For this divine Faith or Belief, founded on the testimony, or upon the promises of GOD himself, is the substance, or the ground, or confidence of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen; that is, true Faith is such a lively representation and assurance of the things we either believe or hope for, as gives them a real subsistence to our minds; 'tis such a demonstration, or evident and full conviction of the reality of those things which 'tis impossible we should now see, that we do believe them as firmly, as if we now beheld them with our own eyes. Heb. XI. 1.

And therefore this Faith, that we deceive not our selves to our utter ruin, wherever it is true and unfeigned, will be the leading, and the governing principle of our whole lives. It will model, influence, and regulate all our most important designs, and the general conduct of all our actions and affairs.

It will make us forward, upon all just occasions, to confess and to own our Lord before men, and to shew that in despite of the apostate World we dare be his Disciples and his Servants and Friends indeed, by our concern for his honour, and also by our being willing to suffer any thing for his sake. It will make us shew that due regard we have for him and for his Religion, by a diligent, uniform obedience to all his commands, and by an earnest pursuit of that holiness, without which no man shall see GOD.

And if we thus live by the rules of our Religion, this Faith which purifies our hearts, and sanctifies our natures, will also give us a comfortable hope, and a modest assurance, that we shall obtain both the pardon of all our sins, and that eternal life which our Lord hath promised in the name of his Father, to all those who believe and obey him. And thus we being justified by this operative and obedient Faith, we shall have peace with GOD, thro' our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

But now this true, saving, justifying Faith, by which GOD grants or works in us Repentance unto life, must and will evidence and approve it self by our bringing forth fruits meet for repentance; that is, it will manifest it self, and will distinguish us by the bent and temper of our minds, and by the general design and course of our lives and actions, from unbelievers, from all wicked and ungodly men.

For *Faith* without such *good works*, whereby we do please and obey, and do in some measure resemble the great *author and finisher of our faith*, is as truly *dead*, and so of no power or efficacy in order to our salvation, as the *body* is truly dead without the *spirit* or *soul*. James IV. 26.

And that fatal wilful mistake which bad men are so prone to make in this matter, seems to be one of the truest and most general reasons of those heathenish, infidel, and scandalous lives with which too many defame and disparage that holy Religion, of which they make outward profession; who are very zealous perhaps too for the forms of worship in that division of christian Society which they are bred up in, or have made choice of.

That slight, customary, traditional assent men were at first taught to give to those general truths of the Gospel, which they never once by themselves considered in particular, reaches no farther than to a decent compliance with that community they belong to, at least in the ceremonial and outside of Religion.

And so this their *faith* is only a bare, tho' perhaps a strong *suspicion*, or apparently in ill men a *fear* rather that those things which CHRIST teaches should be true, than a full *persuasion* that they are so. And as this *faith* neither informs their judgments, nor rectifies their false notions of Religion, nor betters their tempers, nor sanctifies their natures, nor reforms their lives,

lives, so it cannot do any thing towards the saving of their Souls.

But if these outside Christians and false pretenders to that holy Religion, which they know nothing of more than the name, or the *Shibboleth* perhaps, that is, the distinguishing doctrine of their party, were obliged and assisted by their Parents and their masters, as soon as they come to the use of their reason in other matters, to learn and to know, that is, duly to weigh and consider those great fundamental *truths*, *doctrines*, and *duties*, in which all sincere Christians throughout the whole World do agree; they would soon come to be convinced, that that high and holy calling with which GOD hath outwardly at least called all those who have the light of the Gospel, and are baptized into the name of CHRIST, is and ought to be their principal vocation; that this is that which they ought first of all to study, and to take the greatest care and pains about, as being their true and biggest interest, and the most urgent affair and necessary business of their whole lives. Since upon a right understanding of the grounds and duties of this holy Religion; and a suitable practice; or a gross wilful ignorance and neglect of what they are obliged to know and to do in order to be saved, depends a whole eternity of unspeakable, unconceivable happiness or misery.

For no man can be inwardly persuaded from a due application of his mind, and have well weighed and settled notions of
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the Being and of the Perfections of the divine nature, and of the design and performances of our Redeemer, and of the certainty and greatness of those Rewards and Punishments which CHRIST so positively denounces in the Gospel; but he must be so true to himself, as to look upon the Salvation of his immortal Soul, as his greatest concern; and consequently therefore, he must and will make it his first point, and main project and design to avoid that everlasting misery, and to obtain that eternal happiness, one of which he is now upon an impartial enquiry fully convinced must be his unchangeable portion and irreversible doom.

Thus St. John assures us, *He that saith, I know him, that is, he who owns JESUS CHRIST as the Messiah, and the propitiation for the Sins of the whole World; or he who pretends to be a Christian, and keeps not CHRIST's commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* And again, *If we say, that we have fellowship with him, with the Father, and with his Son JESUS CHRIST, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.* 1 John II. 4.
Ver. 2.
Ver. 4.
1 John I. 6.
Ver. 3.

And now that this our faith may be truly Christian, that is, that it may be a vital principle of an holy, unblameable life and conversation, we must not only get our minds fully informed in, and convinced of the certainty and importance of the design and end of the Gospel-revelation; but we must farther inculcate and fix these great truths in our Souls, by frequent meditation,

ditation, and by serious reflexion upon them, and upon the great concern we have in them, and the obligation they lay upon us.

We must labour to get our hearts so thoroughly possessed with, and so deeply penetrated by these fundamental doctrines and maxims of our holy Religion, that they may guide and direct our choice, govern all our appetites and passions; that they may excite and raise our minds and our affections to the pursuit of their proper objects, and *set them on things above*; and so may prevail with us to *seek first*, that is, principally in the first place, and with most earnestness and care and endeavour, *the kingdom of GOD and his Righteousness*, and to *strive to enter in at that strait gate which leads to eternal life*.

We are bound indeed to give an undoubting assent to all those things which GOD hath revealed to us by his Son, and in his word by his Spirit. But the great articles insisted upon as fundamental to the Christian Religion as such, were these, *viz.* That JESUS of Nazareth was the eternal Son of the living GOD, the promised Messiah, and Saviour of the World; that he made expiation for our Sins, and reconciled us to his Father, by his suffering death in our nature, and in our stead; and that he hath thereby purchased for us, not only the remission of all those sins we repent of, and do actually forsake, but also that eternal life which we had forfeited by our disobedience and transgressi-

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ons of the Laws of GOD; provided always that we do so truly believe all the Doctrines of the Gospel, as that we do faithfully and honestly endeavour to conform our whole lives, and all our aims and deliberate actions to those Laws, and to that example of universal holiness our Saviour hath therein set before us.

But to give a more distinct account of those particulars which are comprised in the general notion of our *Faith*, or what we Christians are taught and obliged to believe, it will be proper to consider and explain that received summary of *Faith*, which is commonly call'd the *Apostles Creed*.

This collection of the *chief articles* of the *Christian Faith*, in that very same form and extent in which we now have it, seems not to be indeed of so ancient a date as the Title imports; and some yet shorter forms than this are found in some of the most ancient Writers and Records of the Christian Church. But this Creed is notwithstanding generally agreed to be a good abridgment of that doctrine which the Apostles unanimously preached throughout the World, by virtue of our Lord's commission, and so in his name, to those who were upon their profession of their belief of those fundamental Articles baptized in, or into, the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

SUNDAY

SUNDAY VI.

Of the Creed, commonly called the Apostles,
Of the Sacred Trinity. What believing
in GOD the Father Almighty, Maker of
Heaven and Earth, imports. The sincer-
ity of our faith, or our believing
in GOD the Father, how proved.
What it is to believe in JESUS
CHRIST. He saves us from the
Power, and Guilt, and Punishment of
Sin. How he is our Prophet, Priest,
and King. The obligation these relati-
ons lay upon us. He is the only begot-
ten Son of GOD. Proofs of his Divi-
nity. How he is our Lord. The ge-
nuine effects of this Faith.

WE are taught to believe in GOD the
Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven
and Earth; and in JESUS CHRIST his only
Son our Lord; and in the Holy Ghost; as the
fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Re-
ligion.

It is most certain, both from Reason and
from Scripture, that there neither is, nor
possibly can be any more than one only true
GOD; or one only supreme, Almighty, in-
finitely perfect nature or Being, from whom
all other things are, and upon whom they
depend. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our GOD

Deut. VI. 4.

is one Lord.

And

And it is as certain, that the holy Scriptures of the new Testament do distinguish the Son and the holy Spirit from the Father; and yet do attribute to each of them a divine nature, as well as such properties and operations, as far exceed the nature and power of any the most glorious Creature.

Of this we have evident proof, as in many other places, so most undeniably in that our Saviour commands all who were to be his Disciples to be baptized into this fundamental article of the Christian Faith, there styled in (or rather into) *the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. This is that which our Lord there commands his Apostles to go and to teach all Nations, as a preliminary or ground-work to their observing all other things whatsoever he had elsewhere commanded them to teach. Matthew XXVIII.

The same thing is plainly also delivered in that solemn form of Prayer or Benediction which St. Paul left for the use of the Christian Church, *The grace of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and the love of GOD, and the communion (or the communication) of the Holy Ghost, be with you all*. And it is farther most expressly affirmed; *For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one*. 2 Cor. XIII. 1 John V. 7.

From all which we must necessarily conclude, that the divine nature is communicated by the Father to the Son, or the eternal Word; and to the holy Ghost; and

and that we Christians are obliged to confess, to worship, to obey, and entirely to depend upon the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

And doubtless it much better becomes us to content our selves with what GOD is pleased to reveal to us in the holy Scriptures concerning his own incomprehensible nature and essence, than boldly to wade into such depth of mysteries, as we shall never be able to fathom, who can give so poor an account of our own nature, and of our being what we most apparently are.

Now when we profess to believe in GOD the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, we do in the first place own and confess, that there is an eternal, independent, all-powerful Being or Nature, who can do whatever he pleases; who is the Father, the first Cause, and original Author, and Preserver, and by consequence the rightful Lord and Governour of the whole World, and of all that is therein.

The holy Scripture moreover, the more to engage our fear and love and obedience to GOD, acquaints us very distinctly with several perfections and glorious attributes of this our Almighty Father, viz. that he is the only true Original, unchangeable Being, as that name JEHOVAH imports; *I AM that I AM*, saith GOD. And thou shalt say to the children of Israel, *I AM hath sent me unto you*. The Scripture teaches us also, that GOD is an infinite, incomprehensible Spirit, without body, parts,

Exod. III. 14.

Deut. VI.

parts or passions: That he is a Being of infinite Goodness, Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Justice and Truth: That he is present every where by his essence, knowledge and power: That he is most happy in himself, and hath both his existence or being, and all possible perfections, in and from himself alone. *I AM*, or *JEHOVAH*, plainly imports and signifies, the necessary eternity, immutability, and perfection of GOD, the fountain of all other Beings, and in comparison with whom all creatures may be said not to be, or to be less than nothing and vanity.

Now this Almighty Father was pleas'd to display and manifest his infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness, in bringing this great and beautiful frame of the World, and all things contained therein, into Being, by his word, by his power and will, in six days time; within the distance, according to the most exact and best computation, of about, or somewhat less than six thousand years from the time in which we now live. The more particular History of the order and disposition whereof is recorded by *Moses*. Gen. I. And GOD said, let there be light, and there was Light. Ver. 3, &c.

And as Almighty GOD made heaven and earth, and all that is therein contain'd, all both visible and invisible things for himself, viz. for the manifestation of his glory, and the communication of his goodness to those whom he made capable of knowing, serving, and enjoying him, so

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GOD hath not only the right and the power, but he doth actually preserve, govern and dispose of all his works in such manner as he pleases.

His wise Providence continues and maintains all things in their Being, and in their powers of acting, according to their several natures. The wonderful and vast frame and numbers of the heavenly bodies, some of which are, by the most probable computation, many millions of miles distant from this our little spot of earth; and their regular unerring courses are a demonstration of the superintendency of a superior, infinitely wise and powerful Being; without which, 'tis impossible that things without life, sense and reason, should continue to move and act, as we see and know they do, and have done for so many succeeding generations.

But now as GOD manages and rules the inanimate part of the World, by his absolute power and wisdom; so doth he also govern reasonable creatures by his laws; by what way soever they are made known to them; to whom therefore He is the Author of all the good they either have or do or can do, but by no means of any Sin, or any evil which they commit.

'Tis true indeed, that God both furnishes men with, and preserves to them the Use of that Life, and of those powers, without which they were no more capable of doing evil, than they are of doing good; and that he doth not always hinder those occasions of or temptations to Sin,

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Sin, by which men fall into the commission of it: But 'tis as true, that GOD both commands them not to break his laws; and also that he gives them, especially now in the christian dispensation, both power, and the strongest motives in the World to abstain from Sin, even no less than the loss of his favour here and for ever, and the suffering eternal Punishment in the next Life. And should GOD not permit men the use of that liberty and freedom of choice, with which he created them, he should then, by not dealing with them as with reasonable creatures, such as he made them, undo, as it were, his own work.

Besides which, as there could then be no proof of our obedience to his laws, and submission to his will, so there could be no sufficient foundation for a future judgment, or the distribution of rewards and punishments in the next life, according to that good or evil men had done in this; and consequently, there could be no good argument, or ground, whereupon to build the doctrine of another Life after this; which is so expressly laid down, and so plainly supposed all along in the New Testament.

And thus now to believe in GOD the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, is to be fully persuaded, upon due consideration and thought about this matter, That there is, as hath been above shewn, One Infinitely powerful, good, and wise Being, who is the first cause, and

the last End, both the original and the final cause of all things; and that upon him all things do depend, and are preserv'd by him, and are governed and disposed of as he pleases; and that nothing is, or can be done in the Universe, without either his determinate will, or at least his permission.

But to believe aright this article of the existence or being, and power of GOD, &c. farther yet imports, to justify to our selves and to others the sincerity of such our Faith, by the irrefragable argument of a suitable conversation.

We must therefore above all things take care to make our belief of these fundamental truths, the principle, standard, and measure of all our main designs and deliberate actions. We must always, and in all instances, live and demean our selves, as those who are thoroughly possessed with, and wholly influenced by such an undoubted persuasion.

For Example: We must have frequent and worthy thoughts and conceptions of GOD in our minds, and the profoundest veneration for, and a constant regard to this adorable Author of our Being in all we do. We must fear, love, obey, trust in, and wholly depend upon this our Almighty Father.

If we believe, that he alone preserves, governs and disposes all things, and that we are his children by the adoption of his Grace in CHRIST JESUS, we ought then to cast all our care upon him, and to rest

rest assured that as he best knows, so he will most certainly give us whatever is most for our truest good and advantage.

We must thankfully own all his mercies and favours, and that all the good we receive any way comes from him by such his instruments; and we must take care to use the Talents he intrusts us with to his Glory, and for the benefit of our Brethren his children.

We must receive even afflictions themselves with patience, and with an humble resignation, as from the hand of a wise and a kind Father, who chasteneth us for our good; and we must earnestly endeavour to be the better for them, and not by impatience or discontent, disappoint his designs of love and fatherly care for our Souls.

Again, if we consider GOD as our Father, and that we are made *for him* as well as *by him*, and that he created man at first in his own image and after his own likeness; we shall find our selves strongly oblig'd to endeavour to retrieve that image, and to be as like to him as we possibly can, in all his imitable perfections.

All Generation, we should consider, imports the production of what is like to the parent. And certainly therefore no man ought to imagine, or presume himself to be a child of GOD, who is no way like to GOD: And much less can he pretend to be a Son of GOD, whose inclinations,

will and affections are wholly unlike to, different from, or perhaps contrary to what GOD hath revealed to us concerning himself.

1 Pet. I. 15. We must then, as obedient children—
be holy in all manner of conversation. We must imitate GOD in all justice and truth, in patience and long-suffering, in mercifulness and beneficence, and even in doing good against evil. Do good to them that hate you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, is CHRIST's express command.

Matth. V. 44. Thus we plainly see, that a son-like fear and love, due worship, honour and obedience, faith, hope, and trust in GOD, prayer and thanksgiving to him, an entire dependance upon him, and resignation of our selves to his wise disposal, choosing him who is the sovereign good and author of all good for our only true happiness, and doing all things with regard to him as our last end, and a constant endeavour to resemble him all we can; that all these, I say, do result from, and are necessary consequents of our believing from the heart, and so firmly as we ought, in GOD the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And we see clearly, that we are in all reason obliged to live, and cannot but live as we believe, if our faith be that of the children of GOD, and not that of Devils and apostate spirits; nor yet the false, the no faith, but only the unconsidered, unexamined, and so too vain presumption only of unthinking fools or mad-men.

For

For 'tis scarce possible, that any but such should be able to delude themselves so far as to suppose, they believe things of this nature, so as they ought to do, and which are of such dreadful consequence to all impenitent sinners, if they are true; and yet live as if they were thoroughly satisfied, that they were most false and groundless fables.

How absurd and how shameful a contradiction then to all good sense and reason, as well as to our holy Religion, is the boasting of those most highly-pretending Catholicks, who tell us, that they have the truest and most pure faith of any Christians in the world, and yet lead the most impure and unholy lives. *Mucha fe, mala vida*, is their character to a proverb in their own nation. We believe, say they, the most the best of any men, tho' we live indeed the worst of all men. But to say the truth, that gross ignorance of all Religion, superstitious worship, and fond credulity or implicit faith, that is, neither knowing what they believe, nor why, in which they are so carefully nursed up, is as far from that faith which the Gospel teaches, as their lives are from that holiness it requires in order to salvation.

In the next general Article, we make profession of our faith in **JESUS CHRIST** the only Son of **GOD**, and our Lord. That we believe the eternal Son of **GOD** took our nature upon him, being born of an holy Virgin: And that in our nature he suffered death upon the Cross for the ex-

piation of our sins: That on the third day after he was buried, he rose again from the dead: And afterwards visibly ascending into heaven, now sits there on the Right hand of GOD: And that he shall from thence come to judge all men, both the quick and the dead.

Now to believe in JESUS CHRIST our Lord imports, not only to be fully persuaded, that he is that eternal Son of GOD, which he declared himself to be; and that he is the true Messias and Saviour of the World: But it farther includes our obligation and consent to obey all his commands, who is our Lord and our King; and to put our whole trust in him alone, for our obtaining eternal life, and all other intermediate blessings, only by his mediation for us with his Father.

By the name of JESUS we do understand and own our Lord to be the Saviour or deliverer of his people from their sins. And he saves them first from sin it self, from the power and dominion of sin. For, by the aids of his holy spirit, and faith in the Gospel, he sanctifies their natures, reforms their lives, mortifies all corrupt affections, and carnal or worldly lusts in them, and thus gives them the victory over their ghostly enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil, whose works he came on purpose to destroy.

And then he saves all who are his too from that eternal death which is the wages of all sin unrepented of and unforgiven.

And

And thus he compleats and perfects this salvation, by carrying them thro' this kingdom of grace to his kingdom of glory, and there instating them in that true rest and happiness which remains for the people of GOD after this life.

By the farther name of CHRIST, or Messiah, we profess to believe, that GOD *anointed this JESUS of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power*; that is, that GOD was pleased both to qualify him for, and to declare him to be our King, our Priest and our Prophet; to all of which high offices or functions men were anciently, by GOD's own appointment, set apart and consecrated, by the ceremony of anointing them with Oil. Acts X. 38.

Now CHRIST is our Prophet, as he instructs us in the nature and mind and will of GOD, of which he had most perfect knowledge, as coming out from the Father; and in that spiritual way of worship, which GOD now requires of us. This he teaches us outwardly by his word, and by a successive ministry of the Gospel, which himself appointed, and he hath promised to be with and to assist to the end of the world. And also he teaches us inwardly by that spirit which dwells in, and directs, and governs his Church, that is, all his faithful servants.

He is our Priest, in that he made atonement for us by the sacrifice of himself, and hath reconciled us to GOD, *making his Soul (or Life) an offering for our Sins*, and shedding his Blood upon the Cross for the

remission of them ; and also as he continually makes intercession for us in Heaven.

He is our King, as he gives Laws to, and governs and protects his universal Church ; as he sets up his throne in our hearts, and subdues all vice and sin there ; as he gives us the victory over the World by our Faith in him, and thus controuls and checks the power of Satan ; as he hath conquered Death and Hell for us ; and as he will reward his faithful and obedient subjects, and punish his obstinate and incorrigible enemies at the last day.

And now if we duly consider and reflect upon these relations in which CHRIST the Messiah stands to us, as he is our Priest, our Prophet, and our King ; we cannot but find our selves obliged, by the greatest reason and our own nearest interest, to believe whatever he hath taught or affirmed ; to rely upon him, and that expiation he hath made for us as our only sure refuge ; and to set our selves to learn and do his whole will, all that he commands us, in a firm hope of such rewards as infinitely exceed not only our poor services, but even our present apprehensions and our largest desires.

This JESUS CHRIST we farther believe to be the *only Son of GOD*, in the highest and peculiar Sense, and *our Lord*. We believe that he is the only begotten Son of GOD, as he is of the same essence or nature with the Father. That he is GOD's true, proper, natural Son, begotten before the World was made. He is

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that

that Word which was in the beginning, and John I. 1, 3. was with GOD, and was GOD; by whom all things were made. He is GOD of GOD, Light of Light, very GOD of very GOD, being of one substance with the Father, as the Nicene Creed teaches us from the holy Scriptures. St. Paul affirms, that our Lord CHRIST is over all, GOD blessed for ever. Rom. IX. 5. By which title GOD blessed for ever, the ancient Jews always signified and expressed the one only, eternal and supreme Being, the Creator of the World.

Besides which express declarations in terms, the holy Scripture frequently attributes to our Saviour the perfections of the divine essence or nature, such as are incommunicable to any created Being. Such are not only the forgiving of Sins; but also the knowing all things, and being present in all places, and having all power Matthew in Heaven and Earth, as himself affirms. XXVIII. 18. And Lo, I am with you alway even Ver. 20 to the end of the World. And again, Where two or three are gathered together in Mat. XVIII. my name, there am I in the midst of them. 20.

And this only Son of GOD we farther confess to be our Lord. He takes that style to himself, Ye call me Master and John XIII. 13 Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. He is our Lord by right of Creation, being, as we shew'd above, of the same divine essence with the Father, who made all things by this his Word, who was in the beginning with John I. 2. GOD.

He is our Lord also by right of purchase or redemption. He hath redeemed us Gal. III. 13. from

from the curse of the Law, being made a
 1 Tim. II. 5, curse for us. And this one Mediator between
 6. GOD and men, the man CHRIST JESUS,
 gave himself a ransom for all. And the
 Church of GOD is said to be purchased with
 his own blood. And all power was given to
 him (in this his mediatory kingdom) in
 Heaven and in Earth. So that our Lord
 having an absolute, supreme, universal do-
 minion over all things thus communicated
 to him, both can and doth govern, sup-
 port, defend, and provide for his Church,
 viz. all those whom he hath loved, and
 washed from their sins in his own blood, and
 hath made them Kings and Priests unto GOD
 and his Father.

Revel. I. 5, 6.

And as CHRIST is thus our Lord, as
 he both created and preserves us by his
 power, and has redeemed us with his
 blood, and governs us by his Laws; so is
 he our Lord also by our own free choice.
 When we are baptized into his name, at
 least when we do confirm and repeat at
 his Table the vow we there made by our
 sureties, we do then and there and so of-
 ten dedicate our selves to his Service.

And now if we do in earnest believe
 and consider frequently, and reflect upon
 these things so as we ought, 'tis not pos-
 sible not to have our minds deeply affect-
 ed therewith, and not to have our lives
 influenced and governed by such our belief.

How ought we to be astonished, and
 to have our Souls peirc'd thro' with an
 inward abiding sense of GOD's unspeak-
 able unconceivable goodness, in sending his
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only begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to do and to suffer such great things for fallen apostate man, for such ungrateful rebel-sinners! With what thankful hearts ought we every day to reflect upon, and celebrate that miracle of mercy, that GOD should so love us who were every way so unworthy of the least regard from him, had we done our best to serve and please him? And how much more then, when we had prefer'd the slavery of the Devil, and our own inordinate lusts and passions, to the honour and freedom of serving our Creator, the great Lord of all?

How ought we to love him, and to devote our whole Lives, our Souls and our Bodies to his Service? And with what zeal and diligence ought we to study and to do his will, and to endeavour to promote his honour and glory and his kingdom in the World, by setting up his throne in our own hearts, and by being led and governed by his Spirit, and then by doing all that we possibly can towards the enlarging his dominion, by propagating his Gospel, and bringing others also to the obedience of Faith, by all those ways and means we are capable of employing to this noble end?

Again, since we do believe our blessed Lord to be the eternal Son of GOD, of the same divine essence or nature with the Father, of the same infinite wisdom, goodness, and power; the infinite value of his death for us may assure our hearts, that he,

Phil. II. 6, 8. he, the Son of GOD, who being in the form of GOD, humbled himself, becoming obedient to the death of the cross for our sakes, for our redemption, hath made, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World, and for our Sins in particular, provided we do forsake them, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

And the same faith in CHRIST, as the eternal Son of the most high GOD and our Lord, will for the same reason both encourage and oblige us to believe all that he taught; to rely upon his promises, not only for the remission of all our Sins, thro' his blood shed upon the Cross for that end; but also for the aids of his holy Spirit, and for the resurrection of our bodies, and for eternal life, when he shall come to judge the World in righteousness; and from all these weighty, great considerations, will certainly engage us more and more to a constant, universal obedience to his Laws, and to do our best to walk every day worthy of that high and holy calling wherewith he hath called us.

SUN

SUNDAY VII.

Of our Lord's taking our nature upon him.

The fulfilling of the Prophecies concerning his Birth, &c. prove him to be the promised Messiah. The Sufferings of

CHRIST both in Soul and Body,

whereby he became a Sacrifice for our

Sins. A display of the divine Attri-

butes and perfections in the Gospel-dis-

tribution. The benefits procured for us

by the sufferings of CHRIST. The

effects this amazing love of GOD and

our Saviour ought to have upon us.

The heinous nature of Sin. The most

probable meaning of CHRIST's descent

into Hell.

WE believe that our blessed Lord was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of

the Virgin Mary. This only Son, the eter-

nal Word of GOD, who was from the begin-

ning, and by whom all things were made, in

the fulness of time was conceived and

born. The Word was made, or became flesh,

and dwelt among us. The Body of our Sa-

vour CHRIST was, by the immediate

and sole operation of GOD's holy Spirit,

formed out of the substance of the Virgin

Mary in a miraculous incomprehensible

manner; and after the usual time of con-

ception, was born of, and brought forth

by

John I. 1.

John I. 14.

by her. Thus the only begotten Son of GOD was incarnate and made true man, taking to himself our humane nature, consisting of Soul and Body, and conjoining it with the divine nature in the unity of his person, so that he was perfect GOD and perfect Man.

Being thus conceived in a most pure and spotless Virgin by the *Holy Ghost* coming upon her, and the power of the highest over-shadowing her, he was most free from all corruption or stain, and was thus sanctified or most holy in his humane Soul and Body; that so having no sin of his own, he might, as an *immaculate Lamb*, be a *Sacrifice* for, and bear, or take away the sins of the World.

And thus now this only begotten Son of GOD, always subsisting in the divine nature, was made truly man; and he assumed humane nature, that being thus of the same nature with those for whom he died, he might, by his dying for them, be a propitiation, or make an attonement for their sins. Had he been GOD only, he could not have suffered; and had he been a meer man, he could not have been a sufficient Sacrifice so much as for his own sins, much less then for those of the whole World.

And the better to establish our Faith in this great Article of the incarnation of our Lord, and to prove that he was the Messiah promised of old, and generally expected about that time in the World; we may observe how all the predictions relating

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ting to his family, to the place and to the time of his birth, were punctually fulfilled.

As to the person and condition of his Mother, she was of the tribe of *Judah*, and of the family of King *David*, who descended from *Abraham*; to both whom the Messiah was promised, and that he should be of their race. She was also an unspotted Virgin, as *Isaiah* had prophesied. And *Isa. VII. 14.* St. *Matthew* expressly applies that prediction to the mother of our Lord, *Behold, Matt. I. 23. a Virgin shall be with Child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which being interpreted, is, GOD with us.* And he was born at *Bethlehem*, as was foretold, *Out of thee, Bethlehem, shall come a Governour that shall rule my people Israel; and as the Priests and Scribes declared to Herod, that the King of the Jews should be born there.* *Matt. II. 5.*

And then as to the Time of his appearing, our Lord came in the flesh according to the exact time foretold for the coming of the Messiah by *Daniel*, viz. after 70 weeks of *Dan. IX. years, or seventy times seven years; that is, within somewhat less than five hundred years after the captivity of Babylon.*

He came also at the time foretold by *Jacob*, viz. when the *Jews* ceas'd to be a free people, and to be governed by their own Laws, and by men of their own Nation. *The Scepter shall not depart from Judah, saith that Patriarch, by the spirit of prophecy, nor a Lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; until he who is sent, the Messiah, whom the Father sent*
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into the World doth come: *And to him shall the gathering of the people be.*

Haggai II.
7, 9.

Mal. III. 1:

To which we may add the Prophecy of Haggai, *The desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with my glory, and the glory of this house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts.* And also that other of the Prophet Malachi, *And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his Temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in: Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.* All which prophecies were evidently fulfilled in our blessed Saviour, and in no other.

And in particular the glory of the latter house, or of the second temple, can in no other way be said to exceed or compare with the glory of the first Temple, so magnificently built, and so richly adorned by King Solomon, but only by that honour it received from the appearing of the Son of GOD in the flesh, and conversing therein.

Now a due reflexion upon and serious consideration of the incarnation of the Son of GOD, and his stooping so very low to raise us to happiness and glory, must certainly affect our Souls with a deep sense of his infinite goodness, and must fill us with all the highest degrees of love and gratitude we are capable of. And since our Lord took our humane nature upon him, and was made man, that we might be made the children of GOD, and partakers of a divine nature, how strongly are we obliged by gratitude, duty and interest, to comply with this his gracious design,

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by denying all ungodliness, and all worldly lusts, or all inordinate love to, and pursuit after the things of this life, and to do all we can to perfect holiness in his fear?

How highly are we obliged in particular, to a careful study and practice of that humility, that condescending charity, and hearty concern for the salvation of others, of all which we have so bright and amazing an example in this humiliation of the Son of GOD for sinful, apostate, ungrateful mankind?

Is the Son of the most high GOD thus humble, *meek, and lowly in heart*; and doth *Matt. XI. 29.* he command us all to learn this lesson of him? And dares then any poor despicable worm of a man be proud, and high-minded? Or can any proud, unmerciful, revengeful man pretend to be a disciple of the meek and lowly, the patient, merciful and forgiving JESUS?

We farther profess to believe, that our Lord having thus taken our nature upon him, *suffered under Pontius Pilate; that he was crucified, dead and buried, and descended into Hell.* As our blessed Saviour came down from Heaven, and was made man for us men and for our salvation, so did he in that humane nature, which he took upon him, suffer also for us both in his Soul and in his Body. *His Soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, as himself tells his Disciples a little before he was betrayed and taken. And being in an agony, as we read, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling* *Matt. XXVI. 38.* *Luke XXIII. 44.*

Matthew
XXVII. 46.

Isa. LIII. 6, 10.

down to the ground. And again, being on the Cross, *JESUS* cried out with a loud Voice, *My GOD, my GOD, why hast thou forsaken me?* All which are so many evident proofs of those unconceivable, unknown sufferings, as some of the Ancients style them, that deep sorrow, pain and anguish inexpressible, which our Lord underwent for our sakes, when *his Soul was made an offering for our sins, and the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

And then as to his Body, besides that hunger, and thirst, and weariness, which we read he suffered when he went about preaching the Gospel; he was at last put to the most cruel, and most painful, and shameful death which the ill nature of men had then invented for the punishment of those who had been guilty of the blackest crimes, and the most detestable villainies.

For the Jews having, to satisfy their implacable malice, and hypocritical zeal and envy, extorted from *Pilate*, almost against his will, and wholly against his conscience, (since he openly professed, that *he found no fault in him*) the sentence of death against our Lord; he was not only mock'd and spit upon and buffeted by the insolent soldiers, and insulting rabble; but was tormented with a crown of sharp-pointed thorns stuck into his head, as well to pain and to wound him, as to cast scorn on the pretension he made to be a King, as he truly was, tho' not of this World, which himself owned. And being after all

this

this, scourged with the barbarous inhumanity then used by the *Romans*, to that degree, as to leave only just so much life in the condemned man, as might suffice for his enduring a yet more painful and lingering, as well as ignominious death, He was nailed to that Cross, whose weight before he was not able to carry, without the assistance of one whom they constrained to bear up some part of it with our Lord, then sinking under the pressure of that load. On this Cross he was *lifted up from the Earth*, and there hung with the whole weight of his body for the space of six hours, upon those nails, which piercing his hands and feet, those tender and sensible parts of his torn and mangled flesh, gave him the most exquisite pain and torment imaginable. And at last, by the violence of these horrid tortures, and great loss of blood and exhausted spirits, his Soul was actually separated from his Body, and the vital union was thus dissolved, tho' neither his Soul nor his Body were ever separated from his divine impassible nature.

And thus now as the Sin-offerings, which were types and prophetic representations of this great expiatory Sacrifice, were slain under the Law; so our blessed Lord suffered death, that he might *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*. By this most painful, shameful, accursed death upon the Cross, which the *Romans* inflicted on none but the most flagitious slaves, our Lord did expi-

Heb. IX. 26.

Gal. III. 13. *ate our sin, and redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us, by hanging on that Tree, and being there exposed, as a vile malefactor, to the malediction, the revilings and scorn of the spectators, for our sakes.*

And this blood of the Son of GOD, which he thus shed for the remission of our Sins, when he voluntarily laid down his life for us, he having no sin of his own to answer for, was of infinite value, and of efficacy sufficient for the obtaining all those great ends of pardon and reconciliation with GOD, and eternal life, which our Lord designed to purchase for us, as being the blood of that great incomparable person who was GOD as well as Man.

Now the great end and design of all the humiliation of the Son of GOD, was to promote the Glory, Honour, and Kingdom of GOD his Father, by the redemption of man from that sin and that punishment to which he had made himself liable by his apostacy from GOD, and by the breach of his Laws; and to make man again capable of that eternal life or happiness for which GOD at first created him.

And thus the glory of Almighty GOD is illustrated by the clearer manifestations of his divine perfections in the whole Gospel dispensation. His unsearchable wisdom is evidently seen in his finding out a way to recover his rebellious, sinful, lost creatures, without intrenching upon that justice, which had made and declared death to be the wages of sin.

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His impartial Justice is seen in not letting sin go unpunished, but providing such an expiatory sacrifice, as might be a full and perfect satisfaction for the sins of the whole World.

His infinite Goodness shew'd it self abundantly in sending his only begotten Son into the World, to do and to suffer such great things for us, to lay down his life for his traiterous subjects and malicious enemies.

His Almighty Power was seen, as in all those many and great miracles our Lord and his Apostles did work, in proof of his being the Son of GOD; so especially in GOD's raising our Lord again from the dead, and taking him up into Heaven. His Truth appear'd in sending the Messiah he had so often promised, to accomplish all that was written concerning him by *Moses*, and by the Prophets.

And then as to that other part of our Lord's design, and the end of his coming into the World, *viz.* the salvation of mankind; he procured for us the remission of all our sins, by his blood shed on the Cross for that very purpose; and so reconciled us to GOD, with whom we were at enmity by our contemning his authority, and transgressing his laws.

He obtain'd also for us the promise of the holy Spirit, and grace and strength sufficient to enable us to perform all that sincere obedience, which he now requires of us. And he propounds arguments invincible to every one, who duly considers and be-

lieves them, to engage us in a constant care and endeavour to learn, and to know, and to do his Father's will.

Thus doth our Saviour CHRIST, by the Grace afforded us in the Gospel, redeem us also from the dominion and power of Sin, from the tyranny of the Devil, and of our own sinful lusts and passions. He doth thus repair the dishonour done to GOD by our obstinate disobedience whilst we lived in rebellion against him; and he thus recovers GOD's right in and to us, by bringing us back again to our Creature-state, and to that due allegiance and subjection, which we owe to our Creator, and our sovereign Lord and King.

And lastly, by this his Death and Passion our Saviour hath purchased for us eternal life, or an inheritance in heaven. Almighty GOD for his sake justifies those who had been formerly *ungodly*, or who had been *dead in trespasses and sins*, i. e. He accepts our persons to pardon and peace, upon the Gospel terms of such a Faith in CHRIST, as leads us to repentance and amendment of our lives, and ends in the persevering practice of all those Christian graces and virtues, which our Lord recommends to us, both by his express command, and by his own great example.

Our blessed Lord did likewise by such his Death on the Cross, for the farther assurance of our Faith in him, both confirm the truth of all he had taught, and al-

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so ratify that new Covenant of Grace between GOD and Man, which was made in, and thus now as it were sealed with his blood.

And here it will be very proper and useful to consider, what effects this amazing love of GOD, in sending his dearly beloved Son thus to suffer Death for us, ought to produce in us; and what influence it ought to have, and will have upon our hearts and lives, if we are his children.

Certainly a serious reflexion upon that unconceivable goodness and loving-kindness herein shewn to us, cannot but deeply affect our Souls, and prevail with us to give all the marks we are able of our gratitude, and of all the utmost dutiful affection and returns of love to our gracious Father, who gave this his Son to die for us his disobedient rebellious creatures; and also to our blessed Lord, who thus loved us even whilst we were his enemies, and *washed us with his blood*. And this our love to our good GOD and our Saviour, if it be sincere, must and will make it self appear in a constant care and honest endeavour to know and to do the whole will of our Lord; to keep all his commandments; to promote his honour and glory, by seeking first his Kingdom and his righteousness; and by prevailing with all others as far as we are able, and at the least, by our own unblameable Example, and making our light to shine before all men, to erect a Throne for CHRIST in
their

their souls, and to own him as their Lord and King also, by an uniform obedience to his will and laws.

And the same consideration cannot fail to engage us most heartily to love and to do all the good we any ways can to all the friends and brethren of our common Lord and Redeemer. We shall find our selves hereby obliged to embrace with the tenderest affection, and as our brethren, all those for whom he was pleased to shed his blood, and whom he hath commanded us to love, even as he hath loved us.

This we cannot but do therefore, if we are his disciples indeed. Nor yet can we forbear to forgive, and even to love and to pray for our most malicious and implacable Enemies, and to do good to them that hate us, out of regard to his positive commands, and in conformity to his great example. For, by all these ways we ought to make the best return we are capable of making for these great benefits he hath conferr'd upon us.

This reflexion upon the Sufferings of our Lord will also give us a due sense of the heinousness of all and of every wilful Sin; since GOD would not pardon Sin upon any other terms, than the thus wounding and bruising his most dearly beloved Son, that we might be healed of that plague by his stripes.

It will also make us very humble, and truly penitent, and heartily grieved for, and ashamed of those Sins of ours which were the cause and occasion of all those

those unknown agonies, and most intolerable, inexpressible pains which our Lord endured for us.

It will farther also excite our care and our watchfulness over our own hearts and our lives, that we never consent any more to commit any one known wilful Sin, upon any consideration whatever: Since by every such act of Sin, we do, as much as in us lies, *crucify to our selves the Son of GOD afresh, and put him to an open shame.* We do hereby in effect deny, and we affront our Saviour, as the malicious Jews then did, when they had procured his crucifixion.

Heb. VI. 6.

For by every deliberate act of wilful chosen Sin, as well as by an habitual course, or living in the practice of any known transgression of GOD's Law whatever, we do by interpretation, and in a great measure, slight and reject that salvation which CHRIST hath purchased for us, and offers to us, viz. when we do thus prefer any shameful, fleshly or worldly lust or desire, any poor momentary trifle to the great Lord of all, to him who hath laid down his life for us.

Every such degree of revolt and apostacy from GOD, is a kind of *treading under foot the Son of GOD, and counting the blood of the Covenant wherewith we were sanctified, an unholy (a prophane) thing.* That is, men do by every deliberate chosen act of any Sin, of what kind soever, in some manner vilify and despise the sufferings of CHRIST on their behalf; they do undervalue that sacred blood, which was shed on the Cross for

Heb. X. 29.

for the remission of their Sins also, had they repented and forsaken them; and so they make the blood of CHRIST to be of no more avail to them, than if he had been, and had suffered as a common malefactor.

Gal V. 24.

Ver. 19.

Ver. 21.

Thus doth CHRIST's Death for Sin, upon all the highest reasons, engage us to die to all manner of Sin; To crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts. We must kill and mortify all actual Sin, all the works or deeds of the flesh, recited, viz. Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of all which St. Paul affirms expressly, That they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of GOD: And we must likewise farther kill and mortify all inordinate desires, all sinful lusts and inclinations to these or any other vicious and wicked practices whatever.

Rom V. 6.

If then we hope to partake of the great benefits and blessings of our Lord's death and passion, we must know and find this, by our own happy experience, That our old man is crucified with him, that the body of Sin is destroyed in us, that we henceforth should not serve Sin. Our old man, that is, our former course of life led in any Sin and disobedience to GOD must be, and if we are sincere Christians is crucified, slain, abolished; and that mass of corruption, that depraved nature, which would otherwise carry us on to all wickedness, must be

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be subdued and mortified to that degree, as to have no power over us.

No Sin whatever must have dominion over us -- nor reign in our mortal body, so that we do obey it in the lusts thereof. But on the contrary, we must persevere in all piety, and holy obedience to God, after the example, and according to the precepts of our Redeemer, who died and rose again on purpose to raise us up to this new life, which is to be henceforth led in all godliness and honesty. We must upon all these accounts reckon, that is, we must esteem, find and approve our selves to be dead indeed unto Sin, and to be freed, by the grace of GOD, from all desires and affections unto it, and as it were incapable of the wilful deliberate commission of any known Sin; and we must be alive unto GOD only, that is, always studious and careful to know, and to do his will through JESUS CHRIST our Lord.

Rom. V. 12.

Rom. V. 11.

To all which we may add the consideration of the great influence our Lord's shining example in these his Sufferings for us ought to have upon us, in engaging us to imitate him in the most hard and noble parts, and the most severe tryals of Virtue. We must learn from him the love and the practice of the most profound humility, meekness, patience, self-denial, the most invincible charity, entire resignation to the will of GOD, and a persevering trust in him in the greatest and sorest trials which can befall us; and we must not only be ready and willing to take up our

our Cross, and so to follow our great Master and Lord; but we must rejoice when we are counted worthy to suffer shame, or reproach and scorn, or any persecution from the men of this world, for his sake; *Knowing that hereunto we are called in this evil and adulterous generation, if we will be CHRIST's true disciples.*

And thus now our blessed Redeemer having *his own self born our Sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead unto Sin might live unto righteousness, and be healed by his stripes,* He there expired on that Cross, resigning up his spotless Soul into the hands of his Father.

And our Lord being afterwards taken down from the Cross by his followers, he was *buried, and descended into hell.* Pilate was assured by the Centurion that CHRIST had been some time dead, before he granted his Body to *Joseph.* And those Soldiers, who according to custom brake the legs of the other two, who were crucified with him, and were still alive, had for that reason forbore to break his legs. However, one of them pierced his side with a spear, to make all sure. Now this circumstance of our Lord's being buried, mentioned by all the Evangelists, makes it more certain and undubitable that he was truly dead, and accordingly he was disposed of and laid in a Tomb hewn out in a rock, and a great stone was rolled to the door. And all this makes the great miracle of his Resurrection from the dead the more evident, and more undeniable.

By

By our Lord's descent into Hell, (or into the Grave, as that word often signifies,) probably at first no more was meant than that he was buried, as above. Since in the Nicene Creed, where the word *buried* is used, there is no mention of CHRIST's *descent into Hell*; and in that of *Athanasius*, as it is commonly called, where he is said to have *descended into Hell*, no other mention is made of his being *buried*, than what that phrase imports.

These words indeed, *he descended into Hell*, are not found in any of the most ancient Creeds, which we have yet remaining in the Writings of the most early ages. They were first used, as far as appears, in the Creed of the Church of *Aquileia*, about four hundred years after the Birth of our Lord. And the compilers of that Creed, which we now call the Apostles, because it contains the sum of the doctrine which the Apostles taught, are probably thought to have added those two expressions together in that Creed, which at first might both signify one and the same thing.

However, there is no ground in Scripture for our taking the word *Hell*, in this place, for the abode or mansions of wicked spirits, since it is so frequently there put to signify the Grave only. 'Tis in general therefore, the state or place of Spirits separated from their bodies, or the invisible state or place of abode, as the word literally imports. Our Lord's promise to the penitent thief was, *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise*; which word *paradise*

Luke 23. 43.

radise cannot signifie the same with *Hell* in the sense in which *Hell* is now commonly used in our language. As then the word *dead* expresses the true separation of our Lord's Soul from his Body on the Cross, so his *descending into Hell* may farther signifie his continuance for so long time, viz. two nights, one day, and part of another, under the power of death; Or that his Soul was for that time in a state of separation in the mansion of blessed Spirits, or in paradise, as our Lord himself calls it.

And thus that prophecy mentioned *Act. II. 27.* from *Psal. XVI. 10.* *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption,* (on which place this article, as some distinguish it, seems to be chiefly, or solely founded) was evidently fulfilled, in that our Lord's Body and Soul were not so long separated one from the other, as that his body should thereby come to dissolve and to be corrupted, and so be unfit to receive that Soul which was again vitally united to it at our Lord's resurrection from the dead.

S U N

SUNDAY VIII.

Arguments for the proof of CHRIST's Resurrection. Inferences from hence. This an engagement to us to rise from the Death of Sin to a life of righteousness. Our Lord's ascension, and sitting at the Right Hand of GOD. This a Confirmation of our Faith, Hope, and Joy, and shou'd engage us to set our affections on things above. Of CHRIST's coming to Judgment. This Judgment will be universal. The different Sentence of the righteous and the wicked. The Effect this consideration ought to have upon us.

WE have above considered the several instances and degrees of the humiliation of the Son of GOD, in order to our salvation. He was pleased to take our nature upon him, and to become man for us, that we might be made the Sons of GOD, and heirs of his heavenly kingdom. In that nature he suffered a most painful and accursed Death for us, to deliver us from that eternal Death, which is the wages of Sin. And he was laid in the grave, and continued under the power of Death for some time, that so we might live forever.

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We do next profess our Faith in the several instances of his exaltation, viz. his rising again from the dead; his visible ascent into Heaven; his glorification, or sitting there at the Right hand of GOD; and his coming with Majesty and great Glory at the end of the world to judge all men.

Psal. XVI.

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Mat. XVI.

21.

After that our Lord had remain'd so long in the grave, as might give full proof that he was truly dead; he arose on the third day, and thereby he fulfilled those Prophecies which related to this matter, and likewise what himself had expressly foretold, That he should at *Jerusalem* be killed, and be raised again the third day. Of which his resurrection on the third day, after he had been buried in the earth, *Jonas* his being cast up alive after his being three days and three nights as it were buried in the Sea, and in the Whale's belly, was a type. This was the sign our Lord was pleased to give to those incredulous *Jews*, who not being willing to be convinc'd by the irrefragable evidence of his great miracles, desir'd still some farther proof of his being the *Messiah*, tho' no plainer proof could be given them, except his being raised, or raising up himself from the dead.

Mat. XII. 38.

Now as the Belief of the Resurrection of CHRIST is the main foundation of the Christian religion, so is the Truth of it made out to us and confirm'd by the most convincing arguments, which such a mat-

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 posing it ever so true.

We have the testimony of those his ene-
 mies the Soldiers, who being a watch set
 on purpose to hinder, or to discover any
 attempt that might be made to steal his
 Body from the place it was openly
 laid in, came to the Chief Priests half
 dead with fear, and told them what they
 had felt and had seen, viz. the great earth-
 quake, and the Angel rolling back the stone
 from the door of the sepulchre.

And the testimony of CHRIST's own
 Disciples, tho' his friends, cannot reason-
 ably be suspected here, if we consider
 that they were men of great plainness and
 sincerity; that they asserted this in Jeru-
 salem, where he had been so lately cruci-
 fied before all the people, and where they
 could have no design of getting any ad-
 vantage from spreading a report so very in-
 credible, and so very opposite to the sen-
 timents and interests of the great and
 powerful men, and by which they were
 sure to expose themselves, not only to the
 general scorn and contempt, but also to
 all manner of persecutions, to the loss of
 all they had, and even of their lives.

Nor could there be any probable reason
 given for the suffering so greatly as they
 did upon this account, save only the con-
 viction they had both of the Truth of what
 they affirmed, and of the obligation they
 were under so to do, out of the hopes
 they had of receiving a reward from that

crucified JESUS in the next Life, far exceeding all that they could suffer for him in this.

To several of these his Followers our Lord appeared at several times for the space of Forty days, eating and drinking and discoursing with them, instructing them in his will, and thus confirming their Belief of all which he had said and promised.

And he was seen not only by his Apostles, but by above five hundred Brethren at once, of whom the greater part were alive, St. Paul tells us, when he wrote that his first Epistle to the Corinthians.

And GOD himself also ratified this their Testimony, by giving them power to do Miracles in his Name, as we read ; *And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the Resurrection of the Lord JESUS.* And many thousands both of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and strangers who were there at the feast of Pentecost, hearing the Apostles speak in the tongues of their several Nations, and seeing other miracles wrought by them, were baptized into the Name of that JESUS, whom the Jews had so lately crucified, being all fully satisfied that GOD had raised him from the dead, and had made him both Lord and CHRIST.

A. & II.

Now this undoubted Certainty of our Lord's thus raising up himself from the dead, as he had declared he would do, is an undeniable proof of his being that Son of GOD, which he affirmed himself to be. He raised up the Temple of his Body three days after it was dissolved or destroyed by the

far ex- the separation of his Soul from it; accor-
for him- ling to that sign he had given the Jews, as
ers our the most undeniable demonstration of his
e space divine power, in those words, *Destroy this* Joh. II. 19.
ng and Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.
hem in And since to raise up himself from the
Belief dead to life again exceeds the power of
fied. any meer creature, it follows from thence,
Apostles, that he is that eternal Son of GOD, who
at once, is of the same divine Essence and infinite
t. Paul power with the Father; by whom he is
rst E- also said to have been raised up.

As his Death proved his humane nature,
s their that he was truly Man; so his re-uniting
to do his Soul to his Body, from which it had
And been separated some time, by the power he Joh. X. 18.
ness of had within himself to take up as well as to
And lay down his life, or his Soul, is a demonstra-
nts of tion of his divine nature.

And consequently hereto, whatever our
there Lord hath taught must be true; whatever
he A- he hath promised, threatned, or under-
veral taken for, will most certainly be perform-
ought ed, and come to pass; whatever he com-
me of mands or requires must be comply'd
ately with, as the will and law of our sovereign
GOD Lord and King.

And this Resurrection of CHRIST
made from the dead gives us also the fullest and
our the highest assurance of GOD's being now
the reconciled to us, of his pardoning our Sins,
is an and accepting our persons, thro' the me-
on of diation of our Saviour, to that peace with
o be him, and to that eternal Life, which are
three all the purchase of that blood he shed for
by us upon the Cross, in obedience to the

the will

will of his Father, and out of his most tender love and compassion to the otherwise forlorn and lost condition of the whole race of Mankind.

Almighty GOD by thus discharging our surety from the prison of the Grave, doth as it were own, that his honour being repair'd, and his justice satisfied by what our blessed Lord had done and suffered for us in our nature, he will justify our persons, or deal with us as if we had been always righteous and obedient to his laws.

Now the certainty we have of the Resurrection of our Lord, is the most irresistible argument for, and unshaken foundation of that Faith, and hope and trust in him, and firm reliance upon his veracity, which will necessarily put us upon that care and diligence to *do the will of his Father*, to which alone our Lord hath promised an entrance, or power or right to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Mar. VII. 21.

The Resurrection of CHRIST is farther yet a kind of pledge and assurance, as well as a demonstration of the possibility of our Resurrection from the dead. The real and substantial distinction between Soul and Body, and that the Soul can exist, or can be continued in being, when separated from the Body, and consequently is immortal in its own nature, was evidently made out by his unquestionable Death, or the separation of his Soul from his Body for so long a time, and by his re-uniting them to each other again when he arose to Life.

And

And that Spirit of GOD and CHRIST, by which we are *born again*, or *born from above*, and whereby we are made living members of his Body, the Church of the First-born, will both give us a right to this privilege, and will also actually raise us up, and unite us to our Head. *If that Spirit of him that raised up JESUS from the dead dwell in us*, that is, if that same Spirit of GOD abide in, and rule and govern us, quicken and animate us to lead an holy life, *he that raised up CHRIST from the dead, shall also quicken our mortal bodies by the spirit that dwelleth in us*; the same divine Omnipotency which raised up CHRIST's Body, will also raise up our dead bodies, if we belong to CHRIST, to eternal life with him.

Rom. VIII.
11.

Besides all which, the reflexion we make on the Resurrection of our Lord, should frequently remind, and firmly engage us, to arise from the death of Sin to a life of Righteousness. *As CHRIST was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also must walk in newness of life.*

Rom. VI. 4.

As CHRIST having died unto Sin, that is, upon occasion of, and to expiate our Sins, *once, dieth no more, but liveth unto GOD*, liveth now for ever with GOD: So we likewise must reckon our selves to be dead indeed unto Sin, but alive unto GOD through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. No kind of Sin must henceforth reign in our mortal Bodies, or have any dominion over us: But we must devote our whole selves, all our faculties and powers of action, all our designs, and the general course of our

Rom VI. 10,
11.

whole lives, chiefly to the service and glory of our GOD and Saviour.

Col. III. 2. We must so *rise with CHRIST* here in this life, as that we do *set our Affections on*, do relish, favour, chiefly mind the things *above, not things on the earth*; being now raised up by the grace and spirit of GOD to a new and a spiritual life, we must alway and above all things attend to our high and holy calling, the service of that Lord who hath called us from death to life by the Gospel.

Phil. III. 10. For unless we thus *know CHRIST, and the power of his Resurrection* with St. Paul; unless we are raised by his grace, from being dead in trespasses and sins, to live a new and an holy life in all good Conscience both toward GOD and all men, CHRIST is not in effect risen to us: Nor shall we ever attain to that happy Resurrection of the dead, St. Paul aimed at, without this spiritual Resurrection of our Souls to a life of Gospel-holiness, and a constant daily care above all other things to serve and to please GOD.

Vcr. 11.

If our treasure, that which we are most concerned to get and to keep, that upon which we most value our selves, and place our happiness in, be not laid up in Heaven, but here on Earth, as we most certainly then are not risen with CHRIST, so neither have we any share in, nor shall we ever receive any advantage by his Resurrection.

He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of GOD the Father Almighty. Our blessed Lord having conversed with his

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his Disciples at several times for forty days after his resurrection, did then, in their sight, ascend visibly into Heaven, in that his humane nature. His Body and Soul were, by his own divine power, translated and carried up into the Heaven of Heavens, that is, into the more peculiar residence or place of the fuller manifestation of the majesty of GOD.

Where he now sitteth on the right hand of GOD, the Father Almighty. That is, he is advanced by Almighty GOD to that degree of dignity and of glory, of power and authority, that he rules over all things. Thus St. Paul explains this phrase, *GOD* Eph. I. 20; *raised CHRIST from the dead, and set him* Ec. *at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principalities, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this World, but also in that which is to come; that is, GOD hath exalted his Son JESUS, not only above all earthly Rulers and Potentates, but above all the highest orders of Angels, all the inhabitants of Heaven. And GOD (as he farther adds,) hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body.*

Our Lord then now sitting at the right hand of GOD, that is, all power in Heaven Rom. VIII. and Earth being given to him by his Father, 34. makes intercession for us. CHRIST, as our High-Priest, by whom he was typified in the Law of Moses, is entred into Heaven it self, now to Heb. IX. 24; appear in the presence of GOD for us. He who being partaker of both natures, is
GOD

GOD as well as man, is now our Mediator, our Advocate, and Intercessor with his and our Father in Heaven.

There he now pleads for us, and by the virtue and merit of his death and passion represented there always to his Father, he obtains for us the remission of all our Sins, grace sufficient to help us in time of need, and whatever we ask in faith, and he knows to be best for us in order to that eternal life he hath purchased for us.

Now the belief of and due reflexion upon CHRIST's Ascension into Heaven, and upon that power and authority he there possesses, is very proper to excite and confirm both our faith, and our hope, and our joy in our Lord. As we must wholly, so we may very safely depend upon his mediation, and make all our requests in his prevailing Name, who is so powerful an Advocate for us.

And we may also be assured of his watchful care, protection and assistance in all our wants, in all temptations and trials; since he who hath *loved us and washed us with his blood*, now presides in Heaven as a King, and rules his Church and People, subduing all their and his enemies, and actually bestowing pardon, and grace, and eternal life on all who are his obedient subjects, servants, and friends.

We ought also, and may firmly believe and joyfully hope therefore that he who is our head, both can and will unite us, and all the true living members of his body to himself. He is pleas'd to tell his
Dis-

Disciples, that he goes to prepare a place for them in his Father's house; and that he will come again (at the last day) and receive them unto himself, that where he is, there they may be also. John XIV. 3.

This consideration should likewise not only enforce, quicken and enliven our care and our study to know and to do the will of this our Lord and King; but it should also raise our Souls, our thoughts, our aims and designs above this World, and all these worthless, transitory, perishing things. We should effectually take off our affections, our desires, our hopes, and our fears from all things on the Earth, and set them constantly and chiefly on things above, where *CHRIST* now sitteth at the right hand of *GOD*.

We should hence learn, and be vigorously excited to mind, or as the original word imports, to relish, to be pleased with, and be concerned principally for our eternal state, for the things of *GOD*, and of the life to come; and to value all the things of this world, in proportion only to their subserviency to the glory of *GOD*, and to the promoting our own and other mens eternal welfare.

We should be as earnest and diligent in laying up good store of that never-failing treasure in heaven, and should be as solicitous to be rich in good works, or rich towards *GOD*, as the men of this World are to lay up their poor, decaying, uncertain treasure, and to heap up those riches which they know they must shortly leave behind them.

Our

2. VIX ndol

Our Conversation must be such as becomes those whose hearts are daily in Heaven, and we must look upon and demean our selves now as *Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the same household and family of GOD*; and behave our selves as those who are only Strangers and Pilgrims here, who are on a journey, and on the way towards their country, and their Father's House.

From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. We must firmly believe, that this eternal Son of GOD shall, at the time appointed by his Father, visibly descend from Heaven in great glory and majesty, in that same humane nature in which he was seen to ascend thither. And that all who have ever lived in the World, being raised again to life by God's Almighty Power, and all they who shall then be found alive, all nations being gathered together, shall appear before his judgment-seat, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil.

2 Cor. V. 10.

All unbelieving, profane scoffers, all impenitent, unreform'd sinners, all workers of iniquity whatever, and especially all covetous and uncharitable men; all who neglected to feed the hungry, to cloth the naked, to visit the sick and imprisoned members of CHRIST; that is, all who thus refused to relieve him in those his so distressed brethren, or neglected to do it in some good proportion to their brethrens necessities, and their own abundance, they shall then, had they no other sin but this

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this only to answer for, *go away*, with all other unrighteous men, *into everlasting fire*, Matt. XXV. *prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

And all those, who by the saving grace of GOD have so believed the Gospel, as that they have made it their main care and constant study to obey it too in all things; all who have thence learn'd to deny *all ungodliness and worldly lusts*, or inordinate desires of the things of this World, and to *live soberly, righteously and godly*, shall receive a crown of glory. Tit. II. 12.

And especially those who not being *high-minded*, nor *trusting in* (not valuing themselves upon) their *uncertain Riches*, but in the living GOD, have been, proportionably to the talents they received, *rich in good works*, always ready to distribute, willing to communicate, upon all good occasions and opportunities, to the poor distressed brethren of their common Lord; and in general, all who have followed after *Righteousness, Godliness, Faith, Love, Patience, Meekness*, they shall by our Lord's award and sentence at that day, *go away into life eternal*, and enter into the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the World. 1 Tim. VI. 11, 17.

But besides this universal solemn day of judgment, which will concern all mankind together at the end of the World, every man hath a particular doom or sentence passed upon him at the day of his death; since every man is then consigned to an irreversible, tho' probably a more incomplete and imperfect state of happiness or misery,

misery, than he will be adjudged to at the last great day.

And now certainly a firm persuasion, and frequent representation of this *great and terrible day of the Lord*, deeply imprinted upon our minds, must, above all other arguments in the World, engage us in an holy, heavenly and unblameable conversation. It cannot but make us infinitely careful, and ever vigilant and circumspect both in relation to our hearts, and to our lives. We can never allow our selves, whilst we are under the power and restraint of this reflexion, to think or to design, much less to speak, or to do any of those things, for which we know our Judge will then condemn us to everlasting punishment.

It will make us very solicitous to be always ready to give up our accounts to GOD; and consequently will cause us often to look into the state of our own Souls, and to see in what preparation we are to appear at CHRIST's Tribunal, if we should be summoned, as many thousands have already been, by the most sudden and unexpected death. We shall not dare to sleep one night in any known sin unrepented of, much less shall we dare to live in a course of any known or but suspected transgression of any Law of GOD, or in the neglect of any known and necessary duty.

This reflexion also will oblige us to set GOD always before us, to have our Law-giver and Judge always in our view. This is to walk with him as *Enoch* and *Noah* are

are said to have done, *viz.* to be sincere and upright before GOD; to live always as in his presence, and under a constant sense of, and with a due regard to his all-seeing eye.

It will consequently oblige us to do, and to design all things with at least a general aim at his glory, and our own salvation. It will oblige us always carefully to manage and to improve all those talents of authority and power, of wisdom and knowledge, of wealth and reputation, &c. of any exemplary gifts and graces, and all more especial means, opportunities and advantages of bringing honour to GOD, and doing good to others for his sake, which GOD puts into our hands, for these great and worthy ends and purposes.

In short, this reflexion will strongly oblige us, as to love GOD, so to serve and to obey him too with all our Heart, and Soul and Might. Not to do his work and the work of our own Souls remissly and negligently, and by the bye as it were; but to be *stedfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in our Lord's work*, that is, in all works of piety and charity, and in zeal for his glory; since we are assured that *our labour will not be in vain*; but our reward will vastly exceed whatever we can here do or suffer for our Saviour's sake.

And doubtless every man who gives himself the leisure duly to consider what so highly concerns him, and to whom GOD gives the grace seriously to ponder, to believe,

lieve, and to make a due reflexion upon the necessary consequence of this great article, will not, cannot defer to break off his sins by repentance, to the next day, or the next hour; but he will immediately resolve to *cease to do evil, and to learn to do well*; and then take care for the time to come to govern himself always, and altogether by the rules of the Gospel, least he be surpris'd by death unawares, and his iniquity be his final and unavoidable ruine. *Knowing the terrors of the Lord, saith St. Paul, having before spoken of the day of judgment, we persuade men.*

And it ought to be well and often considered and laid to heart by every one of us, that all false, bare nominal Christians, those who *professing to know GOD, deny him in their works* having been baptized into the name of CHRIST, renounced the Devil and all his works, and promised to keep GOD's holy will and commandments, and having had all the means of grace and opportunities of knowing the will of GOD, and the most invincible arguments, even of eternal life promised to those who obey CHRIST, and of everlasting punishment threatned to those who refuse their obedience; It ought, I say, to be considered, that as these monsters of stupidity and ingratitude are the most wicked and rebellious Apostates from GOD, so will they be the most severely punished and tormented of all the Sons of men.

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And can any man then, who hath once been under the power of this belief, and of these wise reflexions, unless he be wholly forsaken by all good sense and reason, and given up by GOD to a reprobate mind; can any man, I say, who considers these things, be so very a brute as to venture his biggest interest, that of his immortal Soul, upon so very contingent a thing as is the continuance of his life, tho' it were but till to morrow; since on this chance, or this case of mortality, no wise man would hazard any considerable sum of money; which, were it ever so great, must be despicable to the last degree, when compared with the loss of the Kingdom of Heaven, and consequently thereto, being condemned to eternal punishment in the world to come?

And as a steady belief, and a quick, lively sense of CHRIST's coming to Judgment, ought to enforce all outside halfe Christians to repent, and to day, even while 'tis called to day, to hear the voice of GOD, least the door be shut, and they for ever excluded out of his kingdom; and also to engage all sincere servants of CHRIST to be more diligent in doing the work of their Lord: so it is a solid ground of true joy to all such who live in a constant preparation for, and therefore in a comfortable expectation of that great day.

Those wise and happy men who, by the grace of GOD, and the knowledge, or rather acknowledgment, of JESUS our Lord, give 2 Pet. I. all diligence to make their calling and electi-

on sure, and to walk every day worthy of that holy vocation, may and ought, notwithstanding those former sins which they have repented of and forsaken, and their present infirmities and unavoidable failings, or coming short of that perfection they ought to aim at, they may joyfully look, and hope for, and love, and desire this appearing of the great GOD and our Saviour JESUS CHRIST; since he who is to be our Judge, is our friend and our brother, if we are always doing the will of his Father. He is our merciful Redeemer, who shed his blood for us; he is our Advocate, and prevailing Intercessor with his and our Father, who is to judge, and to save us at the last day.

SUNDAY IX.

Of the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Spirit. Proofs of his Divinity. Why he is called holy. His Offices or performances for effecting the salvation of men. The duties incumbent upon us from these considerations. Of the holy catholic Church, what it is. The Error of the Church of Rome in this matter. The Communion of Saints, what it is; and the obligations it lays upon all Christians. The terms on which the forgiveness of Sins is promised. The certainty of the general Resurrection. Of everlasting life, and what is implied therein. What influence the sincere and hearty belief of these great truths ought to have, and will have upon our whole lives.

Believe in the Holy Ghost. As we are baptized in (or rather into) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; so we believe that this eternal Spirit of GOD the Father, and of GOD the Son, is of the same divine essence with the Father and with the Son, tho' in some sense, in some relations and properties, distinguished from both.

For the holy Scriptures do frequently attribute both the name, and also the proper perfections and operations of Almighty

GOD to the Holy Ghost, as well as to the
 Acts V. 34. eternal Son of GOD. Thus St. Peter makes ly-
ing unto the Holy Ghost, to be the same with ly-
ing unto GOD. And St. Paul declares, that
 Christians are *the Temple of GOD*, forasmuch as
 1 Cor. III. 16. *the Spirit of GOD dwelleth in them*, expressing
 the same thing a little after by saying, that
 Chap. VI. 19. *the body of a Christian is the Temple of the*
Holy Ghost. And our Lord promises his
 John XVI. 13. Disciples, that *the Spirit of Truth, which he*
would send unto them from the Father, should
guide them into all truth; and should shew
them things to come; which certainly GOD
alone can do.

As it is then our duty to believe what-
 ever GOD is pleased to reveal to us, up-
 on his bare word and authority; so since
 the holy Scripture so plainly teaches, that
 the eternal Son of GOD, and the holy Spi-
 rit of GOD, are of the same divine na-
 ture, and have the same divine attributes,
 which are incommunicable to any meer
 Creature; and yet the same Scripture most
 expressly affirms, that there is but one only
 GOD; it will necessarily follow from
 thence, that this eternal Son and holy Spi-
 rit are in such manner *one* with the Fa-
 ther, as not to make a plurality of Gods.
 And we are obliged to believe what is
 there revealed to us in this matter, tho' it
 be never so much above our capacity in
 this state fully to comprehend it; because
 we are so taught by truth it self.

The first of those thirty nine Articles of
 Religion, which we of this Church do
 generally profess to believe, states this

Faith

Faith in the holy Trinity, with all the clearness this matter seems to be capable of, in these words;

There is but one living and true G O D, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Now this Spirit of GOD is essentially and originally *holy* by his divine nature; that is, separate and pure from all possible mixture of sin or corruption, or of any imperfection. And he is also called *holy*, as he is the author, the fountain and spring and promoter of all holy and spiritual life to all true Christians.

In order to the good and salvation of mankind, this holy Spirit inspired the Prophets of old, and the Evangelists, and the Apostles of our Lord: And by the miracles which he empowered them to work, in confirmation of the truth of their doctrine, the Christian Religion was planted and took root, and spread it self over all the World in a very few years, notwithstanding all the disadvantages it lay under upon so many other accounts, and notwithstanding all the power, and malice, and opposition of Men and Devils.

It is by this holy Spirit that our Lord, to whom all power is given in Heaven and in Earth, still governs, maintains, and propagates

Matthew
XXVIII.

pagates his kingdom here on Earth, and still increases and presides over his Church, adding thereto such as shall be saved.

To which end he hath appointed, and doth, and will continue to the end of the World, an order of men set apart by the Apostles and their Successors, who should receive such gifts and assistance of the Spirit of GOD, in virtue of that Commission, *whereby CHRIST sent his Apostles, as his Father sent him*, as should enable them to discharge the office of Governours, and Pastors, and Teachers in his Church, in order to the subsistence and continuance of it to the end of the World.

JohnXX. 21.

And this same holy Spirit graciously accompanying those ordinances, which GOD hath appointed to be the ordinary means of grace and salvation, *viz. the ministrations of the word and sacraments*, regenerates, teaches, convinces, persuades, governs and sanctifies every particular member of the Church of CHRIST. Thus we Christians are said to be *born of GOD*, and to be *born of the Spirit*; that is, we have a new nature, or a new principle of spiritual and divine life wrought in our Souls by this holy Spirit, and suitable inclinations, and designs, and course of life, led in godliness and honesty.

It is this good Spirit which enlightens our minds with the saving knowledge of the will of GOD, revealed to us in the Gospel, and which makes us to understand, and weigh, and consider what we there read; and to be so thorowly affected with,

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and prevailed upon by the arguments and motives there offered, as to engage our Souls to the service of GOD, and of our blessed Saviour.

To this holy Spirit we owe the subduing our natural and acquired corruptions, and the too sensible depravation of our Souls; the inclining of our wills to the study and choice of that *one thing necessary*, and the raising our minds, and fixing them upon *things above, not upon things on the Earth.*

This holy Spirit of CHRIST, without whom we can do nothing, plants and encreases in us all Christian Graces and Virtues, *viz.* Faith, Hope, and Charity, Love to GOD above all things, and an ardent desire and constant care to approve our selves to him in all things. It works in us brotherly kindness, and tender charity towards all men, true lowliness of mind, meekness, long suffering, patience, temperance, and continency, self-denial, contempt of this World, and absolute resignation of our selves to the will and disposal of our good and wise Father.

This holy Spirit, in a word, perpetually guides and directs us in a steady course of piety and holiness; it strengthens us against all the power of the enemies of our Souls; it supports us in all difficulties and dangers; it gives us the victory over the World, and the Flesh, and the Devil; it counsels and encourages us in all the ways of GOD.

And thus also this holy Spirit, uniting us to CHRIST our head, and making us feel the

gracious influence we thence derive, as we are living members of his mystical body, comforts us in all afflictions which can befall us, with a joyful hope, and modest assurance, that we being led and ruled by this Spirit of GOD, we are also the Sons of GOD, and Heirs of his heavenly Kingdom.

Now, all these considerations, if suffered to dwell upon our minds, cannot but instruct us in the great reasonableness and necessity, and enforce upon us the careful practice of these following duties.

We cannot certainly but be most sensibly affected with, and most truly and heartily thankful to our good GOD for such his great condescension, thus to dwell in our hearts by his holy Spirit, and so to guide and rule us, and to repair that image of his in which he created us at first, by *creating us again in CHRIST JESUS unto good works*, and thus fitting us for the enjoyment of that eternal happiness, even the enjoyment of himself in heaven, for which he at first designed us.

Eph. II. 10.

We ought also to give all diligence to cleanse our selves more and more from all filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit; from all mixture of pride, or hypocrisie, or sensuality; from all inordinate love of the World, and all eager desire of these poor, mean, transitory things; from all ill nature and revenge; and to perfect holiness all we possibly can, that so we may be the less unworthy to receive and entertain so great, so divine a Guest,

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We must never therefore by any sinful affection to, or by compliance with any known iniquity, resist, or grieve, and so at last quench this holy Spirit, and chace him, drive him away from us; since we do thereby provoke him to leave us to be given up to, and to be possessed by that wicked spirit, who watches all opportunities to enter into those, who are forsaken by GOD, by reason of their incorrigible obstinacy, and wilful apostacy from GOD, and their rebellion against him. But we ought carefully to attend to, and most chearfully, readily and gladly to obey all his blessed motions.

And since we are *born of GOD* by this Joh. III. 8. holy Spirit, or *born of the Spirit*, that is have received a new principle of spiritual and holy Life, and *are renewed and are taught*, and *are sanctified in CHRIST* Tit. II. 5. *FE-SUS*, or *called to be Saints*; we ought I Cor. II. 13. I Cor. I. 2. humbly to acknowledge our entire dependance upon this good Spirit of GOD; and to give to him alone the glory of whatever we are, or have done, or can do in order to please GOD, and to work out our own salvation.

All our sufficiency is of GOD, who hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts, Ga'. IV. 5. that we might receive the adoption of Sons. 'Tis by the grace and powerful assistance of this Spirit of GOD and CHRIST dwelling in us, that we are *not in the flesh still, do not live after the flesh, nor mind the things of the flesh*; but that we are *in the spirit, walk after the spirit, and mind the things of the* Rom. VIII. 9.

Rom. VIII. 2. *the spirit ; and are thus made free from the law of Sin and Death.*

No man then ought proudly and vainly to value himself and to despise others, upon the account of any greater attainments, or measure of grace, or proficiency in the ways of G O D, and of piety, or holiness which he hath arrived to, above other men ; since it is G O D who works in us both to will and do whatever is good and well-pleasing to him, by this his holy Spirit. For, *in us, that is, in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing.*

And 'tis from the meer favour and grace of G O D, that we are not plunged into the same depth of Sin and of misery, with the worst and the most profligate workers of iniquity. For, *who maketh thee to differ ?* 1 Cor. IV. 7. *saith the Apostle, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive ? Now if thou didst receive it ; why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it ?*

The holy Catholick Church, the Communion of Saints. We hereby do profess to believe, that there was a society or body of men gathered together, first by the preaching of our Lord in Judea, and afterwards by his Apostles and Disciples both there and in most places of the then known World : and that there still is, and shall remain to the coming of CHRIST to Judgment, a Society of men believing the same Doctrines, and living by the same Laws, which we are taught and enjoin'd by them, and by their Successors who were commissioned by them, as they were by CHRIST himself, to propagate, continue, and

and to set up and promote the visible kingdom of GOD, and the open profession of that holy Religion which was first instituted by the Son of GOD appearing in our humane nature.

Now this *holy Catholick Church*, is the general Society, Assembly, or united Body of all those who make open profession of believing and obeying the Gospel, and of serving GOD, or going to GOD by CHRIST, as the only Mediator between GOD and Man. This they do profess to do in hopes of receiving remission of their Sins, of obtaining strength to enable them to perform all that GOD requires of them in this new Covenant of mercy and grace, and in hopes of that eternal life which CHRIST hath purchased for, and promised to bestow on those who believe what he taught, and give all diligence, that is, who use an honest, hearty and constant endeavour to know, and to do the will of his and their heavenly Father.

And this *Church of CHRIST*, or Congregation of all the faithful, is eminently *Holy* both in its end and institution, it being the design of our Lord, to purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works; whose chief business and aim it should be, in this present life, to purify or cleanse themselves more and more from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of GOD.

And 'tis *holy* also in its offices and ordinances, viz. the preaching and hearing GOD's holy word, administering the holy

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Sacraments, and worshiping GOD both in publick and in private with that holy worship, which is suitable to his spiritual nature, and to his revealed will.

Now this holy Church, or society of men, who live up to what they do in earnest believe, is, as the word *Holy* most properly imports, separated from *the world which lyeth in wickedness*, and from the sinful customs, maxims, aims and designs, and practices of the men of this world: since these men love the world more than they love that GOD who made it, and so have their portion in this life; which, short and uncertain as it is, they yet take more care about, and more eagerly pursue its pleasures, profits, or honours, than they do the endless happiness of the world to come; and by such ill made choice, they distinguish themselves from true Believers.

Eph. I. 12.

Rev. V. 9.

For this Body of CHRIST, which is the true Christian Church, over which he is *the Head, being redeemed to GOD by his blood*, is likewise thereby redeemed from *all iniquity*. Hence all sincere Christians are frequently styled *Saints* in the holy Scripture of the new Testament. They must, and they do take care to distinguish themselves, as was said, from the men of this world in an eminent manner, by an holy and unblameable conversation.

This *holy Church* of CHRIST we do farther acknowledge to be *Catholick*, or to be a general universal Church; not confined to any one place, or to any one nation, as was that of the *Jews*, who were obliged to per-

perform their more solemn legal Worship of sacrificing, in no other place than at the Temple at *Jerusalem*, after that GOD was pleased to chuse that place to put his Name there. Whereas now the Christian Church consists of all those to whom the Gospel is preached or made known; and who are thereby called to be *Saints*, and chosen out of all Nations and Countries throughout the whole World; and who live according to the Laws of that spiritual Kingdom of CHRIST.

This Church is *Catholick* also or *universal*, in relation to that Doctrine which is generally believed, and assented to by all the faithful, as to those points at least which all Christians do agree to have been taught by our Lord and his Apostles, and their Successors; and which are delivered down to us in the undoubted Writings of men inspired by the Holy Ghost; and receiv'd as such by all who profess themselves Christ's Disciples, all over the Earth, teaching us all things necessary to salvation.

In the largest sense indeed of the word *Catholick*, the Church may be said to comprehend all the faithful that ever were before or since the coming and preaching of the *Messiah*, and ever shall be before his coming again to judge and reward every man according to his works; that is, it comprehends both the Church militant, those who are engaged in a spiritual warfare, and are as yet in a state of probation and trial here on earth, and also the whole Church now triumphant in Heaven.

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Most certain it is, that every National and particular Church, which is established upon the belief of what we are plainly taught in the Gospel of CHRIST, and in which GOD is worshiped, and the holy Sacraments are administered, as we are there directed and commanded, and by those who are successively commissioned by our Lord, is a sound part or member of the universal Church.

And St. Peter's decision of this matter wholly overthrows the vain pretence, which his presumed Successor at Rome makes to confine, in a plain contradiction to the sense and meaning of the word *Catholic* or *universal*, the Christian Religion to his very unsound and particular part of that Church, which hath built so much straw and stubble upon the foundation of the holy Scriptures, which are to be our rule and guide.

Acts X. 34.

For St. Peter, in whose Chair the Bishop of Rome would be thought to sit, and from thence to derive his infallibility in matters of Faith, most expressly defeats that his ill-grounded and arrogant claim, by asserting, as if it were on purpose and with design so to do, That GOD is no respecter of persons, that is, He hath no regard to any personal external prerogatives of Nation, place, or such particular succession, as is here supposed: but in every Nation he that feareth GOD, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him.

When we make profession to believe the Communion of Saints, we do farther acknowledge, that as all true sincere Christians all over

over the earth do partake of the same high privileges and advantages by the promises of the Gospel, so they ought to look upon themselves as living members of one and the same Body, and consequently they are obliged to contribute all they can to the mutual welfare and advantage of each other.

For being admitted into the Church of CHRIST, which is his Body, by Baptism, and having receiv'd the adoption of Sons, by that Spirit of his (only begotten) Son which GOD hath sent forth into all our hearts, and being heirs of GOD through CHRIST, Gal. IV. 5, 6; and heirs of his heavenly Kingdom, we are all closely united to each other by the near relation of Brethren in CHRIST; or rather, we are parts and Fellow-members of the same mystical Body, the holy Catholick Church, of which CHRIST is the common Head.

Being now thus one Body, and animated, led and governed by one and the same good Spirit, the Spirit of love and of a sound mind, we ought to be of one heart, and of one soul; as the whole multitude of them that believed are said to have been. We must not only live in perfect good correspondence and agreement, but in the most intimate union and conjunction one with another; always endeavouring, as St. Paul exhorts the Ephesians, to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Acts IV. 32. Eph. IV. 3.

And, as we must love as Brethren in the strictest tie of that spiritual Relation which we have one to another, so we must study
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and endeavour, as was before hinted, by all manner of ways, to procure and to promote the good and the happiness of each other. We must be both ready and also glad to distribute, and willing to communicate to the relief and support of those who stand in need of any of those talents GOD hath intrusted us with for that end.

We must minister to all their necessities cheerfully and liberally in some good proportion to our estates and abilities, whether in regard to their souls or to their bodies; and we must at least, by the shining light of an holy, heavenly, unreprieveable conversation, provoke all men to glorify our Father which is in Heaven, by their also bearing much of the same good fruit.

The forgiveness of Sins. We do hereby profess to be assured, that Almighty GOD, out of his infinite compassion, and in consideration of that blood of the new Covenant which our Lord shed upon the Cross for the remission of Sin, will pardon all those transgressions which they do heartily repent of, and cease to commit any more, to all those who believe the doctrine which our Lord taught, and make it their constant care to govern themselves by the Laws which he hath given them.

And we do farther believe, that GOD will not only for CHRIST's sake discharge us from that eternal Death or punishment which we were liable to suffer upon account of our former disobedience to him, and our rebellion against him, in the wilful breach of his Laws: but that he will also

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for CHRIST's sake, according to this new Covenant of grace and mercy, accept of our sincere, unfeigned resolution, and constant daily endeavour to serve and to please him as we ought, tho' we do still come short of perfect righteousness and unfeigned obedience.

However, we must so believe the Gospel, as not only to be heartily sorry, and earnestly beg GOD's pardon for our past offences; but we must also presently and forever forsake every evil way; and we must give more diligence, and must take more effectual care to know and to do his whole will for the time to come, than we do about any other, or above all other things whatsoever, if we hope to have our Sins forgiven.

Our believing *the Resurrection of the Body, or of the Flesh*, imports our firm hope, belief and assurance, that these our frail mortal bodies, which being laid in the grave, shall return to that earth out of which they were taken, shall by the Almighty power of GOD, be raised up again to life, and shall be united to our Souls; so that one and the same person shall appear before the judgment seat of CHRIST, to receive the things done in this his own body, whether they be good or evil.

Besides all other Arguments drawn from the consideration of the providence and justice of GOD in the administration of humane affairs, for a future judgment, and by consequence for the resurrection of all men, we have most express assurances of this

matter in the holy Scriptures. Our blessed Lord himself, who is to be the Judge at that day, peremptorily affirms, *That the hour is*
 Joh.V.28,29. *coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of GOD, and shall come forth; they that have done good, to the Resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the Resurrection of damnation.*

Nor can any man reasonably doubt, but that he who by his infinite power made this visible frame of the World out of nothing, and who having at first formed man out of the dust of the ground, breathed into his nostrils the breath of Life, whereby man became a living Soul, can by the same Almighty power animate and enliven the same dust, and as easily restore life to that Earth, into which Bodies are finally resolved, as he could give life to it at the first; since with GOD all things are possible.

Our Bodies indeed (if we are true members of that mystical Body of which CHRIST is the Head) shall be changed for the better; as well the bodies of those who had departed before in the Faith of CHRIST, and slept in their graves, as of those whom our Lord shall find alive at the general Resurrection. The Bodies of all the Saints shall be made incorruptible, immortal, and glorious Bodies, like to that of our Lord, which is now in the highest Heavens. The
 1 Cor. XV. *dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall*
 52, 53. *be changed. For this corruptible must put on*
 Phil. III. 21. *incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. And the Lord JESUS CHRIST*
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shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body.

And the Bodies of those miserable wretches, who thro' their affected ignorance, their wilful infidelity, their profane contempt or gross neglect of the means of grace and salvation tendered to them in the Gospel, have gone on in a state of impenitence, shall then arise to the resurrection of damnation. They shall be so qualified as to be able to endure, and still to subsist under those torments, and that punishment which the justice of GOD shall doom them to suffer. The wicked, and all unmerciful, all uncharitable men in particular, *shall go away into everlasting punishment.*

Mat. XXV.

46.

And it is certainly very agreeable to the divine Justice, as well as to the mercy and goodness of GOD, that the very same Body should be also rewarded or punished, accordingly as the man in his mortal state yielded his members servants to righteousness unto holiness, or servants to uncleanness and to iniquity.

Rom. VI. 19.

And the Life everlasting. Amen. This everlasting Life is the completion or consummation of all that our blessed Lord hath done and suffered for us; and the end of all our hopes. Now by *life everlasting* we understand, and profess to believe, that all CHRIST's true and faithful servants, all the children of GOD, and so children of the Resurrection, being by the power of GOD raised from the dead to life again, shall for ever be and remain in a state and place of the highest dignity and

Luke XX. 36.

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glory, of the greatest joy and pleasure, and all that now unconceivable happiness which they are any ways capable of.

In this blissful state we shall be freed from all the miseries of this Life, from all Sin, and from those imperfections and infirmities, from those calamities and sorrows which the best of men are liable to, whilst they are in the Body, that is, from all possibility either of suffering or doing any evil.

We shall then, as our blessed Lord assures us, be *equal to the Angels of G O D*. The powers and capacities of our Souls will be then refined and enlarged to the measure of those glorious and blessed Spirits; and our Bodies will be spiritualized, and made like to our Saviour's now glorified Body; and we shall be transformed into, and recover perfectly that image and likeness of GOD, in and after which he at first made man.

In a word, we shall for ever live and reign in the Kingdom and presence of GOD, and of our blessed Redeemer, and we shall together with all the holy Angels, and with the Spirits of all the just men made perfect that ever lived in the world, be made unspeakably happy by such farther manifestations of the Glory of GOD, and by such communications of his love and favour, and such improvements of our nobler faculties, as it cannot now enter into the heart of any man to desire, to hope for, or to understand. We shall be as holy, as perfect, and as happy as our nature

nature can possibly bear; and as a GOD of infinite wisdom, and power, and goodness, can make his dearest Friends and Children; and all this to an endless Eternity.

But O the unspeakably miserable and forlorn, and for ever deplorable Condition of those wretched, careless, or obstinate and impenitent Sinners, who shall be raised up too out of their graves, but 'tis only to die a second Death, or death everlasting; by which phrase the Jews proverbially expressed and signified final, utter, irrevocable destruction.

This will be inevitably the sad and certain portion of all those desperately foolish men, who either lived without GOD in the world, without any regard to his Authority and Laws; or who making profession to know GOD, denied him in their works, i. e. it will be the portion of all both profane and atheistical proud Sinners, and of all false Christians, all careless, grossly negligent, sensual, worldly-minded, revengeful, uncharitable men, who thus misrepresented and disparaged that holy Religion they profess'd by their unchristian and unholy Lives.

For our blessed Lord positively declares, that all workers of iniquity, all impenitent Sinners, shall be for ever banished from the presence of GOD and of CHRIST; and consequently from all possibility of being ever happy. They will be doomed to the place and company of the most accur-

sed apostite Spirits, and with them tormented for ever.

The cruel and never ceasing reproaches of their awakened Consciences, when they come to compare those mean, fading trifles, which they foolishly took in exchange for Heaven, and which they purchased their Hell with, will, like *the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is never quenched*, for ever wrack and torment their guilty Souls with the utmost extremity and anguish, rage and despair.

All the fearful or cowardly, all those who by complying with the false maxims and sinful customs of the world, or for fear of suffering persecution, who were afraid or ashamed to confess CHRIST and his Religion, *the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters*, (and such are all they who love any thing more than they do GOD) *and all liars, shall have their portion in the Lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*

And is it possible now that any man, in the use of his reason, can pretend to believe these great Truths of the Gospel, and not make such due reflexion upon them and upon himself with relation thereto had, as their own nature and the concern he necessarily hath in them, viz. whether he shall be happy or miserable to all Eternity, peremptorily demand of him?

Or is it possible that any Man can weigh and consider these great and important Truths, and yet prevail with himself

self to continue one Night or one Day longer in any course of Sin, or under the guilt of any single act of known iniquity unrepented of, since that delay only may prove fatal to his poor Soul?

Either a sudden unforeseen Death may snatch him away, which is the case of great numbers of Men every year; or GOD's being provoked by such neglect of his gracious Call to give him up to a reprobate mind, may occasion his living on still, and at last dying in a state of impenitency, and so out of all hopes of Salvation upon the terms of the Gospel, which are, Faith and Repentance; which Repentance always includes not only sorrow for Sin, but turning from it, and an entire Reformation of our hearts and our lives.

Certain it is, that we then only believe these things in earnest, and to any good purpose, when we do so frequently and seriously consider them, as that they influence the general course of our lives and of our actions; so that we do steadily govern our selves by these principles, and do universally practise what they teach and oblige us to; since the hazard is so very great which we run every hour in an impenitent state, and the damage and loss we thereby incur is so wholly irrecoverable, and so without all Remedy.

SUNDAY X.

Faith and Repentance the general duties and conditions of the Gospel. Faith in general, what it is; its chief Objects, or the sum of the Christian Revelation, as to what we are to believe. Repentance, what it is; it properly signifies a change of the mind, and of an ill course of Life, upon the promises of the Gospel. The aggravations of Sin. The fruits of Repentance. True repentance includes uniform obedience; which St. Paul comprises in those general terms of denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously and godly. What it is to know G O D. The Obligation we are under to an early Piety, from the frame of our nature; and from the injustice or sacrilege they are guilty of, who rob G O D of any part of that Service they owe him.

THE two most general Duties, or parts of the Christian Religion, or of that Knowledge of the only true G O D, and of J E S U S C H R I S T sent by him to be the Saviour of the World, which leads to eternal Life, are, as was before observed, Faith in G O D as revealed to us by C H R I S T,

CHRIST, and in the Son of GOD the Messiah; and obedience to all his Laws: which obedience is often expressed by, and always included in that repentance the Gospel requires of, and exhorts all men to.

A true lively or living Faith then in its more general notion, and a careful and constant obedience to all CHRIST's commands; or such a repentance, and shame and sorrow for our past sins, as makes us not only detest and forsake them, but engages us in a vigorous pursuit of that universal holiness, or purity of heart and life, which must fit us for seeing GOD in glory; These are the two fundamental and comprehensive duties which are required of all the subjects of that kingdom which our Lord came to set up in the World.

Thus we read, *JESUS came into Galilee, Mark I. 14. preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of GOD, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of GOD is at hand. Repent ye, and believe the Gospel.* And St. Paul makes repentance towards GOD, and faith toward our Lord *JESUS CHRIST*, to be the sum of the doctrine which he had preached in order to converting or discipling both the Jews and Greeks, which he also styles preaching the kingdom of GOD. *Acts XX. 21. Ver. 25.*

I have already given a large account of the main particular Articles of the Christian Faith, or what we are obliged to believe, in the explication of that ancient

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Abstract, or Summary, called *the Apostles Creed*.

We are now to consider *Faith* more generally, as it is a principle productive of, and always in conjunction with a steady, universal obedience to all the precepts of the Gospel. This obedience, which springs from a lively faith, and firm persuasion of the truth of the Christian Religion, usually begins in repentance; and must necessarily so begin in all those who were not baptized, or converted from their evil ways, or not until their adult age, and so had been actually engaged in sinful courses. And this obedience goes under the name of repentance very frequently in the new Testament, and particularly in the two forementioned places; where repentance and faith are put to signify all the other duties of the Christian Religion.

Now this general faith required of us in the Gospel, is a firm unshaken belief of, and an hearty assent, from due consideration, to the truth of whatever CHRIST hath revealed to us by himself, or by his Apostles, in the holy Scripture, concerning the nature and will of GOD; and more especially touching the design and efficacy of his own performance, and his mediation, in order to the recovery and salvation of mankind, for which GOD sent this his beloved Son into the World.

The Sum of which Revelation amounts to this, *viz.* That Almighty GOD, out of his great love and tender pity to his revolted subjects and creatures, the children of

of men, was pleased to send into the World his eternal Son, the promised Messiah, upon an embassy of peace and reconciliation.

That for his sake, who took our humane nature upon him, and did therein both perform and suffer whatever GOD required of him, as our ransom, and in our stead, GOD would graciously please to receive all true penitents, how great soever their former offences had been, to pardon and peace with himself, through the mediation of that his only begotten Son.

That GOD would not only forgive them all their past sins which they had repented of, confessed, and forsaken; but would also, for CHRIST's sake, and upon their earnest prayer, give them all those aids and assistances of his holy Spirit, which were needful to enable them to perform that sincere uniform obedience to his Laws which he now requires.

And that upon their perseverance in the open profession of this their faith in the Son of GOD, and in that holiness of heart and life which the Gospel teaches and obliges all men to, they shall receive that crown of glory, that eternal life which CHRIST hath purchased for, and promised to all those who rely upon his mediation, and who so believe his promises and threatnings, as that they make it their business to serve, please, and obey him, or to seek first the Kingdom of GOD, and his righteousness, i. e. who study and pursue all those ways and means which lead to that Kingdom, before and above all

all other things, before the riches, the honours, the pleasures, or any other advantages of this present short life.

And that our Lord JESUS CHRIST was that Son of GOD he declared himself to be, that true Messias, or Saviour of the World, who came thus to save his people both from the dominion of sin, and from the punishment due to it, and to make them the Sons of GOD, and heirs of his heavenly Kingdom.

This, I say, was the primary importance and sum of that faith, upon the belief and profession whereof the Apostles, and their more immediate and following Successors, baptized their profelytes or converts to the Christian Religion, and so made them members of that mystical body or Church, of which CHRIST is the Head.

This then we see is that belief of the Gospel which our Lord joins with repentance, in that first sermon whereby he prepared his hearers for receiving that Kingdom of GOD which he came to preach and to set up at that time. This is that faith toward our Lord JESUS CHRIST, which together with repentance towards GOD, St. Paul declares to have been the substance of what he taught in compliance with, and in discharge of that Commission our Saviour gave him at his wonderful conversion, when he sent him to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto GOD, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance

heritance among them who are sanctified by Faith that is in him.

And thus is that repentance for the remission of sins, the preaching of which John the Baptist styles the beginning of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST the Son of GOD, ever in conjunction with, and indeed founded upon faith in the Mediator; or the belief of that Gospel, i. e. of those glad tidings of great joy to all people, which our Lord came both to procure for, and to publish to all mankind, viz. That GOD was in CHRIST, reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Mark I. 1; 2 Cor. V. 19;

Now repentance thus founded upon the belief of the remission of sins, which our Lord's Apostles were commissioned to preach, and the execution of which is thus expressed, and they went out and preached that all men should repent, may be thus considered as another, or that other principal duty of the Christian Dispensation; since it is at least an indispensable preliminary, if we may so speak, or a firm and solid foundation of all those other virtues and graces, which entitle us to, and fit us for the happiness of Heaven, thro' the mercies of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. Mark VI. 12.

The original word we now have, which we render *repentance*, imports a change of mind, and consequently of our actions and course of life, or making a different and better judgment of things than what we did before, upon second and wiser thoughts. And so Gospel-repentance may be said to be such a change of our mind or judgment, and

and of our inclinations, as obliges us to come over from folly and sin, to the wisdom of Religion, and to the study and practice of Piety and Holiness; by perseverance wherein we hope for the remission of our former transgressions, and for that everlasting life, which CHRIST has promised to all those who believe and obey him.

This is called *Repentance unto life*, which GOD is said to have granted to those Gentiles who had received the word of GOD at *Cæsarea*, by the ministration of St. Peter, and were also baptized with the Holy Ghost. And it is styled *Repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of*.

Acts XI. 18.
2 Cor. VII. 10.

Now to complete this our Repentance, which is in general such a dislike to, and hatred of, and sense of the danger of our former evil ways, as makes us resolve to quit and forsake them, and to take better courses for the time to come; it will be necessary that we recal to mind, as far as we are able, all those sins which at any time we have been guilty of, and especially those of a deeper dye, which our own consciences do most readily accuse us of, and reproach us for.

And we are not only to reflect upon the several kinds of sins, but also on the number, the manner, and frequency of committing them, and all other aggravating circumstances; as if they have been committed against evident conviction and clear knowledge, and against the checks of our own conscience; if with choice and de-

deliberation, with design and contrivance; and when we had time and leisure to consider, and to resist the temptation; if our sins have been such as have given scandal to others, either by our tempting and bringing them into the same guilt, or encouraging, or abetting, or assisting them in any Sin, or our dishonouring thereby the Religion we profess; or if we have often relapsed into the same kind of sin, and especially, if after vows and resolutions made of better obedience; or if we have still gone on in any ill course, in despite of any remarkable either Judgment or Mercy; or even of GOD's patience, *the Rom. II. 4: riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, all which we ought to look upon as so many calls from GOD, to lead us to repentance.*

And after all, even the narrowest search we can possibly make into the wickedness of our own hearts and lives, we shall find our selves to have need of holy *David's* caution and prayer, viz. that GOD would *psal. XIX. cleanse us from our secret faults*; that he would pardon those many errors and failings which we either have not taken notice of, or have forgotten. *Who can understand his errors? saith that Prophet, and therefore cleanse thou me from secret faults.*

And certainly such an impartial review of, and due reflexion upon the nature, and number, and other aggravating circumstances of our transgressions of GOD's Laws, cannot but deeply affect the best of us, at our first entrance at least upon a
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religious life, with that sorrow, and shame, and hatred of our sins, and that bitter remorse which they most justly deserve, and stand in need of. For every deliberate, tho' but single act of chosen Sin, is a bold affront to the majesty, and direct opposition to the nature and will of GOD; and by such our wilful rebellion against our Creator and sovereign Lord, as well as our horrid ingratitude towards our Preserver, and daily Benefactor, and gracious Redeemer, it not only sets us at the greatest distance from the sovereign Good, and our only true Happiness; but it also exposes us to GOD's displeasure, and to his utter forsaking us here, and to everlasting punishment hereafter.

When therefore we have thus thoroughly considered, and acquainted our selves with *the plague of our own hearts*, and with our frequent and heinous transgressions of GOD's Laws, we must make as particular a confession, as we are able, of all our sins, and profession of our hearty sorrow and unfeigned repentance for our great provocations, with the lowest prostration of our Souls before our offended Lord; together with all those aggravations above mentioned, or such others as our own consciences will, or may suggest upon our impartial enquiry.

And after such a deep sense of, and humiliation for our past follies, and a firm resolution to forsake every evil way, and to turn to the Lord with our whole heart, we may, and we ought, with an humble

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confidence in the goodness and the promises of Almighty GOD, to lay hold on that new covenant of grace and mercy which our blessed Lord had purchased for us, and sealed with his blood shed upon the Cross for the remission of our sins. For this remission of sins, together with, and founded upon such a sincere, effectual repentance, he commanded to be preached in his name among all nations. And this our merciful High-Priest is our Advocate with the Father, and the Propitiation for the sins of the whole World, and he liveth for ever to make intercession for those who come to GOD by him. Luke XXIV. 47. 1 John II. 1, 2. Heb. VII. 25.

But now all these fair steps and good dispositions and resolutions, if they go no farther, will leave us short of that repentance the Gospel requires in order to fit us for the kingdom of Heaven. If we hope to flee from the wrath to come, we must bring forth fruits meet for repentance, saith the forerunner of our Lord; and to the same sense the evangelical Prophet Isaiah, Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him. Mat. III. 7. Isa. LV. 7.

We must therefore not only resolve that we will, but we must now actually and presently break off all our sins; we must not only detest and abhor, but for ever renounce and flee from all evil practices and principles, or designs; and we must not only carefully examine, but effectually and universally reform whatever hath been amiss in the temper of our minds, or the course of our lives and actions.

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And we must likewise for the time to come. always be upon our guard; and more especially against those sins, to which either our bodily constitution and temper, or our former evil custom, or any outward circumstances in our course of life, our trade or profession may have most easily and frequently, or at any time betrayed us into. Here we are particularly obliged to use all our utmost care and caution. We must both watch incessantly, and pray earnestly, that we may not enter into, that we may not at any time by surprise, or negligence fall into, and be overcome by these to us most dangerous temptations.

And that our *repentance* may be *unto life*, or may be such as the Gospel demands in order to our salvation, we must take care that it proceed from an inward sense, and a thorough conviction of the great reasonableness, necessity, and withal, the hopeful issue or event of such our *turning from Darkness to Light, and from Satan to GOD*.

We must therefore found it upon a firm belief of the goodness of GOD, and upon the promises he hath made in the Gospel of pardon to all who lay hold on, and come up to the terms of that new covenant, which he hath made in the blood of his Son shed upon the Cross for the remission of all their sins who should *come to GOD by him*, that is, of all who believe and obey the Gospel.

Our repentance too, that it may be available, must be sincere and universal;

not partial, and with a reserve of any one darling sin. We must forsake all and every evil way, and thought, and word, and work; and we must turn to the Lord our GOD with all our Heart, and with all our Soul. We must not only avoid all gross and crying sins, all notorious transgressions of GOD's Laws; but we must carefully abstain from all kind, and even from all appearance of evil. As we must never hereafter deliberately consent to any known iniquity, upon any consideration whatever, so we must always keep a watchful eye upon our hearts, and a strict guard against all first motions and inclinations to sin, that we be not surpris'd into the commission of any fault or misdemeanour, whereby we may offend GOD, and break our peace with him.

But we must farther consider, better than men generally do, that *repentance*, as it imports only turning from, or forsaking Sin, yea all and every Sin, is but one part, and that perhaps the least too, tho' the first indeed of that obedience which the Gospel teaches us, or of that knowledge of GOD, and of JESUS CHRIST as sent by him, which leads to, and ends in eternal life. For as we must cease to do evil, so we must learn to do well. We must not only be dead indeed unto sin, but henceforward we must be alive unto GOD thro' JESUS CHRIST our Lord. Rom. VI. 11.

For St. Paul, in that celebrated place which can never be too often had in remembrance by all sincere Christians, seems

Tit. II. 11.

to give us a summary of the main doctrines of Christianity with relation to practice, or to that obedience which is the genuine effect and consequent of faith unfeigned, and sincere repentance, first by *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts*; by which he plainly means our forsaking all evil principles and desires, as well as sinful actions; and then by *living soberly, righteously, and godly* all our days. For the *grace of GOD that bringeth salvation*, (or the saving grace of GOD) hath appeared to all men; the Gospel of CHRIST hath been every where published, teaching us that *denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts*, we should all of us who look for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of that great GOD, and our Saviour JESUS CHRIST, live *soberly, righteously, and godly* in this present World.

Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts or desires, i. e. renouncing all impiety, or not living any longer without regard to GOD; and also banishing *all worldly lusts*, i. e. all inordinate love of, and such eager pursuit after the things that are in the World, which St. John styles in general, *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*; i. e. impurity, or sensuality, covetousness, pride, and vain-glory, as excludes the love of GOD, by making us break any of his Laws; This, and this only is that repentance we have treated of as the first step we make towards that Kingdom of GOD, and towards that Righteousness of his

his which our Lord commands us to seek in the first place.

But all this amounts to no more than to a negative holiness, or *a ceasing to do evil*. 'Tis indeed that renouncing the Devil, and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; which is the first promise and vow we make by our sureties in baptism.

But we farther then also do promise, not only to believe all the articles of the Christian Faith (of which a full account hath been already given) but likewise in the third place we promise, *That we will keep GOD's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our life.*

Faith then, we see, and Repentance, i. e. such a firm persuasion of the truth of the promises, threatnings, and doctrines of the Gospel, as engages us actually at the present and for ever hereafter to *deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live, soberly, righteously, and godly*, are the two first, more general, and as we may say, preparatory duties of the Christian Religion. Our Saviour's first preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom of GOD in Galilee (as was before observed) was in these expresse terms, *The Matt. I. 15: time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of GOD is at hand, repent ye, and believe the Gospel.*

And all those more particular commands which at our baptism we promised to keep, and to walk in all our days, are by St. Paul comprehended in the aforemen-

Tit. II. 12. mentioned place, under those three distinct heads of *Sobriety, Righteousness, and Godliness.*

Sobriety, as it is a part of Christian Wisdom, Obedience, and Holiness, includes all that duty, all that good government we owe to our selves, or which we stand obliged to perform in relation to all natural pleasures and enjoyments, as we are reasonable creatures, as we are made by GOD in his own image, and as we Christians are yet farther created again in **CHRIST JESUS** unto good works.

Righteousness or Justice comprehends all that duty which we owe to our Neighbour, i. e. to every man who bears that same image of GOD in which the first man was made in common with our selves. It comprehends all that honest, just, equitable and upright dealing; and all that good will and charitable beneficence, and that fair allowance which we owe to the whole race of mankind; and for a yet nearer relation and stronger reasons, to all who are GOD's children, and our Lord's brethren, by the adoption of his grace in **CHRIST JESUS**, and by the sanctification of his Spirit.

And then *Godliness*, or Christian Piety, and that more spiritual worship which the Gospel instructs us in, obliges us to the careful performance of all those religious duties which we owe to Almighty GOD, not only as to our Creator, Preserver and Governour, but as to our Redeemer also, and our Sanctifier; by which names and

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relations GOD is now made known to us in the Gospel of his Son.

Now since *Godliness* or *Piety*, that religious worship, and awful regard and obedience we owe to the supreme Lord of all, is the great reason and the surest foundation of all that *Sobriety* and *Righteousness*, that is, of all those duties we do owe to our selves, or to others, upon any account; we will first consider, and explain what this *Godliness*, this short abstract of all that duty and observance GOD hath a right to demand from us, as we are rational, intelligent, and depending Creatures, and as we are Christians too, may import and signify in all its latitude and natural or reasonable extent.

And here we must observe, that the whole of our duty towards GOD is most frequently both in the old and in the new Testament expressed by knowing GOD, John XVII. 3. and knowing the Lord, and particularly by knowing the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom he hath sent: as also by fearing, and loving, by honouring, serving and obeying GOD, &c. since these duties especially, and all other instances of our highest reverence and esteem do necessarily result from our knowing, or having such right and true notions of GOD, as are worthy of, and suitable to the nature and perfections of the first and most excellent and transcendent Being.

We must therefore, in order to such our knowledge of GOD, often and seriously employ our minds and understandings,

those nobler Faculties, by which GOD hath distinguished us from, and exalted us above all visible Creatures, in searching after GOD our Maker; in devoutly meditating upon, and admiring his infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, which are so manifest in the beautiful Frame, Order, and steady course of the Universe; and that All-wise Providence, by which he maintains, disposes of, and governs all things in Heaven and Earth.

And as we cannot properly be said to know any object of our reason and understanding, which we have never thought upon, or have not well considered; so nothing can be more just, as well as more for our advantage, than that we should accustom those more divine and superior powers and capacities, which GOD hath bestowed upon us for that very end, to the contemplation of that sovereign Lord of all; since he made us thus after his own Likeness, as hath been often hinted, that we might *seek after and find him*, and love, and serve, and obey, and delight in him; in whom alone immortal and reasonable Spirits can find their true and perfect happiness.

But now to know GOD in the Scripture Language, doth not only signify to have worthy conceptions and thoughts of his eternal Power and Godhead; to acknowledge him to have all possible perfections in and from himself; and to be the first Cause and the last end of all things, which as

he

he made, preserves and governs, so they do and must depend upon him: But that Knowledge farther implies all such affections and dispositions of our Soul towards GOD, and then all such actions and demeanour, as are consequent upon, and suitable to such our apprehensions of his Greatness, Goodness and Glory.

For from such Knowledge, and due and frequent consideration of the Nature and Attributes of GOD, as is above described, these other indispensable Duties must naturally and necessarily follow.

We must alway *sanctify the Lord GOD in our hearts*; that is, we must have the most worthy thoughts of, and all the highest reverence and esteem for the first and sovereign Good, which we are capable of framing in our minds. We must there set up GOD, as our GOD. We must own him as the Author of our Being, and of all the good we have or can enjoy, and consequently as our rightful Lord, and our King, and our daily Benefactor; and we must therefore devote our selves early and entirely, without any reserve to his Service.

¹ Pet. III. 15.

For when we know, i. e. consider and reflect upon the wisdom, and power and goodness of GOD, and so far as we know him in Truth, we shall and we cannot but glorify him as GOD, and be thankful to him. Know thou the GOD of thy Father, saith David to his Son Solomon, as the best Legacy he could bequeath to him; and

¹ Chronicles XXVIII. 9.

Know the Lord, know no other please

serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind.

And therefore as it is the best we ever can, so it ought to be the first employment we do give our minds, as soon as we come to any competent use of reason, to acquaint our selves so thoroughly with the nature and design, with the great reasonableness, excellency and necessity of Religion in order to our Happiness, as that we do immediately engage our selves in the service of that GOD, who, as we ought always to remember, made us for himself, and who alone can make us truly and everlastingly happy in and with himself.

This is to know GOD so as we ought, and so as we are obliged to do by the tenure of our being rational intelligent Agents, to apply our selves as early as possibly we can, to learn and to do all that will of his, and to pay him all that Homage and Duty for which he created us; and not to rob him of any part of that Life, all of which he gave us for this very end and purpose.

'Tis indeed the prerogative and the most peculiar character of our nature as we are Men, that we are capable of acknowledging and living with a constant due regard to that GOD from whom we came, and with a design of pleasing him, and of promoting his honour and glory in the world, in conjunction with our own supreme felicity.

We

We are therefore obliged, we see, as we are reasonable Creatures, to dedicate our whole lives to that GOD who made us, and to own him as our sovereign Lord, and that right he hath to our obedience and service. And consequently we ought to make him our GOD by our free and early choice, and by deliberately devoting our selves to him, with the first dawning of our reason, right judgment, and true sense of things.

For we are still no better than bare Animals, and do not sufficiently distinguish our selves from the brute Beasts, till we come to raise up our Souls to the contemplation of our original and first cause; and to resolve that he is, and must be our last End too, and our only true happiness; and that consequently hereto, our chief business in this World, is to live always in or under such a lively and grateful sense of his goodness to us, in making us what we are, and in such an entire submission to his will, and such conformity as far as we are able, to his nature and imitable perfections, as may best fit and qualify us for that blessed sight and the more perfect knowledge and enjoyment of GOD in the life to come.

But if we arise no higher than bare Sense, and these poor visible objects, when we come to the use of our more divine and nobler Faculties, if we have no other aims, if we employ our selves in no other business than to provide for the Body, and feed the Beast, know no other pleasures than

than the grovelling Brutes do, we are still in their low Form, and differ from them only in Speech and Figure, we do in effect renounce and abdicate the privilege of our superior nature.

Besides, it is a kind of Sacrilege to rob our Creator of any, much more of the most vigorous and best part of our Lives; to all of which he hath as indefeasible a Right, as he hath to any part of them.

For we are still no better than Beasts, and do not sufficiently distinguish our selves from the brute Beasts, till we come to raise up our Souls to the contemplation of our original and first cause; and to resolve that he is, and must be our last End too, and our only true happiness; and thus consistently pursue our chief business in this World, is to live always in or under such a lively and constant sense of his goodness to us, in making us what we are, and in such an entire submission to his will, and such conformity as far as we are able, to his nature and imperfections, as may best fit and dispose us for that blessed light and the more perfect knowledge and enjoyment of GOD in the life to come.

But if we still no higher than Beasts, and these poor visible objects, which we come to the use of our more divine and nobler Faculties, if we have no other aims, if we employ our selves in no other business than to provide for the Body, and feed the Beasts, know no other pleasures

SUN

SUNDAY XI.

Of Confirmation. Who are obliged to instruct and prepare young People for it. The Design and End of it. The Advantage thereof. The Duty arising from this dedication of our selves to GOD. What it is to love GOD. This the surest Foundation of Obedience. Our Love to GOD, if true, will oblige us to keep his Commandments, and to resemble him as much as we can. Our Endeavour to be like to GOD. The Notion which the wisest both Heathens and Christians had of true Religion. In what our Likeness to GOD consists. Our Care to resemble GOD, the proper Foundation of our Hope, Trust, Joy and Delight in him, and the most certain mark of his Love and Favour to us. To delight our selves in GOD, what it is.

THE Jews, whom GOD chose out of all the Nations on the Earth to be his peculiar People, reckoned their Children to be *Filii praecepti*; as they styled them, Children of the Commandment, and so capable of keeping all those Laws which GOD gave them, as soon as they completed the Age of twelve Years. They were

were from that time obliged to keep all those precepts their Fathers were bound to teach them; the Sum of which was, Deut. IV. 23. *To fear and to love the Lord their GOD, with all their heart; to keep his Commandments, to serve him, and to cleave unto him, and not to forget the Covenant of the Lord their GOD which he made with them.*

And we have in our Church a wholesome and a very useful, but shamefully neglected Institution, that all the Children of those of our Communion should be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as they come to a competent Age, and are sufficiently instructed in the Grounds and Duties of that Religion, into which they have been baptized in their Infancy. Which Duties and Grounds of Religion, are generally contain'd in that Catechism taught in our Church. Of this Catechism, they are not only to learn the words by heart, but are also to be instructed in the sense and the meaning of them, both in publick and in private, by their Parents and Masters at home, and by their respective Ministers, who are presumed to be always ready for, and desirous of such opportunities of discharging that part of their duty.

For the Minister or Curate of every Parish is, by the order of our Church required, upon notice given of the place where, and the time when the Bishop intends to confirm, either himself to bring, or to send in writing with his hand subscribed thereto, the Names of all such Persons within

his Parish, as he shall think fit to be presented to the Bishop to be confirmed by him.

And it should be farther considered, that all Sureties for Infants to be baptized, or God-fathers and God-mothers, are solemnly required by the Minister, in the presence of the Congregation, and thereby they do tacitly promise, to take care that that Child, for which they are Sureties, and in whose Name they made their baptismal Vow, shall be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he is sufficiently informed, and knowing in the Principles and Duties of the Christian Religion, which is there expressed by the Child's being able to say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar Tongue; and being farther instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose.

Now the design and end of this pious and useful Institution, as we read in the order of Confirmation, is, That Children being now come to the Years of discretion, and having learned what their God-fathers and God-mothers promised for them in Baptism, they may themselves, with their own Mouth and consent openly before the Church, ratify and confirm the same, and may also promise, that by the Grace of GOD, they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe such things as they by their own Confession have now assented to.

And I cannot see, I confess, how Parents and Masters of Families, whom nature and reason, and how Sureties, whom their

their own voluntary Promise make responsible in some manner for such Children as they undertake to instruct, or to procure that they may be instructed in the Knowledge of that Religion they are entered into at their Baptism, how such, I say, will be able to answer to Almighty GOD another day that so general and shameful neglect of the Souls of those Persons, who probably may and do too often miscarry for want of such instruction as they in effect obliged themselves to give or to procure for them, when they made those solemn Vows in the Names of such Children.

The most obvious and general Cause of that shameless impiety and profaneness, of that avow'd infidelity and deplorable immorality, which like a torrent hath over-run that part of the World which is yet called Christian, seems to be the want and neglect of seasoning the minds of Children with the first principles of piety, and with an early sense of the obligation they are under to learn and know and do the will of GOD, so soon as they are capable of such knowledge and performance of their baptismal Vow.

And as the engaging our Children early in the knowledge of their duty and the service of GOD, is the surest and most effectual way by which we can hope to retrieve in any measure the primitive state of Christianity, and that holiness which was the Character of those times and persons; so we have already some

happy

happy experiments both in this City and elsewhere, both at home and abroad, of the good success of the method proposed.

Several young Persons in this City, whose Parents, or Sureties, out of a due regard to the Honour of G O D, and of our holy Religion, and to the Salvation as well of their own Souls, as of theirs whom they were obliged to take care of, had caused them to be examined and farther instructed by their respective Ministers, have soon after their Confirmation (to which they were not admitted ordinarily till they were *Fourteen* years of Age, and then presented by the Minister of their Parish to the Bishop as duly qualified,) desired such farther assistance and direction from the said Minister, as might fit them for the Lord's Table; and have afterwards made Conscience of frequenting that holy Ordinance, when they had opportunity of so doing.

Which Duty, tho' our Church strictly obliges all her Sons to receive the holy Sacrament, at least *three* times in a year, from the Age of *Sixteen* years and upwards, yet they might possibly either have neglected for many years longer, or perhaps for their whole Lives; (as too many do) had not this happy occasion of solemnly taking upon themselves that Vow which at their Baptism was made in their Names; disposed them to, and as it were made way for their living such Christian Lives, as taught them to comply with this as well as other parts and instances of their duty.

And

And we are assured from very good hands, that this way of engaging young Persons to an open profession of their Faith, and their Knowledge, and their deliberate Resolution to make good what their Sureties had undertaken for at their being made Christians, before they were admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is used with great success in some Churches of the reformed Religion beyond the Seas, as well as in those few of ours, which have the advantage of giving that good example,

And if that excellent Pattern were generally followed, it would in all probability have a very great influence upon the minds and lives of all such young Persons; and they would with great advantage promote the Glory of G O D, and the salvation of their own Souls, by their thus professedly and early entring themselves into the service of G O D, before any evil inclinations grew up into vicious acts, and so into habits, and before the false maxims and evil customs of the World had time to make deep and lasting impressions upon their yet tender minds, and more flexible age.

And it is hoped, that those Treatises upon this subject of Confirmation, shewing the great expedience of this Institution, and directing to such preparation as is necessary in order thereto, and other like pious Books as have been for this purpose put into the hands of all the Masters of Families in some Parishes, may already have had,

and

and may hereafter have some good effect. Those Masters of Families will have a great deal of guilt upon them, if through their fault and neglect the success doth not in some degree answer the end of those Pastors, who thought they might by these means best discharge their duty, and acquit themselves of the care they ought to take of the Souls of all those to whom they have that more peculiar relation; that so they may be the better able to give an account of those for whom they watch, with joy and not with grief, at the last day.

If any man still wants or desires farther satisfaction, or conviction in this highly useful Institution of our Church, he may have recourse to *Three practical Essays, viz. On Baptism, Confirmation, and Repentance*, written by a pious and learned Divine of our Communion; which Book as it is for that purpose printed in a cheaper form, so it were to be wished that it might be put into the hands of all such Children and Servants as are come to the years of discretion, by their Parents and Masters or Ministers, for the ends above specified.

Certainly the first Duty we owe to GOD, and upon which all the rest do depend, is to make him our GOD by our own act, and our personal choice of him and of his service; and to make open Profession, as we may have occasion, and at all times by a Christian and holy Conversation at least, that we are his servants, who is our Lord by his own indisputable Right and Dominion over us. We ought to devote our

selves to him with a deliberate consideration both of our duty and interest, as soon as we attain to any competent Knowledge of moral good and evil.

And from that time forward we ought to look upon Religion, or a constant care to know and to do GOD's will, and to resemble him as far as we are able, as the only great and important Affair of our whole Lives ; and the first and truest mark of our being come to years of discretion and judgment. Since it is by the early and the right use of this prerogative, that we men are raised above, and are chiefly, if not only, both more wise and more happy than the Beasts that perish ; and also than all those bare figures of Men, whose stupidity or impiety sinks them so deep into the brutish, or devilish state and nature.

And now having thus made the great Lord of all, our Lord and our GOD in particular, by our own free and deliberate choice, and having thus acknowledged our natural subjection to, and dependance upon him for all our happiness both in this World and in the next, we must consider of, and perform all such other duties as do plainly result from the knowledge we have of the Nature and Attributes of GOD, and of that Relation we stand in to him, as he is our GOD, *i. e.* as he is the Author of all good to us, and as we are his subjects, servants and children.

We must therefore upon all these reasons, and upon all these considerations, fear and love and obey GOD ; we must be-

believe and hope and trust in him; and must resign up our selves wholly to his wise conduct and disposal; we must do our best to resemble and to imitate him; to be as like to him as we possibly can in this state; and by all the ways we are able, we must promote his Honour and Glory, and all those other great ends for which he gave us these our immortal Spirits, which we have now so expressly dedicated to his service.

'Tis true indeed that the Love of GOD above all things, is a brief and comprehensive abstract of all those other Duties we owe him. This precept, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength,* is said by our Saviour, to be the first of all the Commandments. 'Tis the most excellent and perfect of all, because it is the most necessary and surest Foundation of obedience to GOD, and the most general comprehension of all other our duties.

Now to love GOD with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, doth plainly import, that whatever is within us, in our make and constitution, in our nature, or within our power, by what name soever it is called, which can be any way subservient or made use of in order to our loving, adoring and serving our Creator, ought to be employed chiefly and vigorously by us to that great and worthy purpose.

To love GOD with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, obliges us then to make him the principal Object of our best and

noblest faculties, our understanding, and our will; *viz.* we must employ the reason of our minds frequently in the contemplation of his Nature, and of his Attributes, and in the study of his Laws, and of all the manifestations of himself and of his will to us.

To love GOD with all our hearts imports yet farther, to fasten all the affections of our Souls chiefly on him; to make him the center of our fear, our hope, our desire, our joy; to cleave unto him with stedfast purpose of heart, as to the life of our Souls; and to look upon his service and an interest in him as the only worthy end, and business, and happiness of our lives.

And thus now we see, that to love GOD with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, is to love him in the most perfect manner we are able, and with the utmost degree of complacency, adherence and affection we are any way capable of exerting in this present imperfect mortal state. 'Tis to have our Souls always turn'd towards GOD, and fixed upon him as our last end; always possessed and filled with such an habitual awful reverence and dutiful regard to him, as bears rule and sway in our hearts, governs and influences our whole lives, and makes us ever vigilant, diligent and careful above allthings, to conform our selves to his nature, and all our designs and deliberate motions and actions, and even our thoughts and words, to his will and pleasure.

Now this precept of *loving GOD with all our heart, &c.* being, as our blessed Lord

calls

calls it, *The first and greatest of all the Commandments*, that is, the most sure and necessary foundation of our obedience to all his other Laws, and consequently of all the hopes we can reasonably entertain of that eternal Life which is promised to those only who do his will, by our Saviour CHRIST; it may be needful that we do consider more particularly what are those most genuine acts, most natural effects or properties, whereby we do best express the sincerity of this our Love to GOD, and whereby we may best assure our selves, that we are endued with this vital principle, which alone can make any of our services acceptable to GOD, through our blessed Redeemer.

Now our loving GOD in the best manner, and to the highest degree we are able in this life, which I have above shewed to be the measure of this our Duty, necessarily supposes us to esteem, and to value him more than, and far above all other things. It obliges us frequently and seriously to think upon, and to consider him as the first and best of Beings, as the most absolute and perfect good in himself, and withal the most beneficial and advantageous, the sole Author of all good to us.

And these due apprehensions of the transcendent excellency, the greatness and the goodness of GOD, and of our necessary dependance upon him for our happiness, impressed upon our Souls by deep and frequent meditation, will make us take him for our portion, with a vast preference

rence to every thing that can come in competition with him, tho' it were the whole World, and all that is in it.

And then as we cannot thus prize and value and choose him before all other things, unless we esteem him to be better and more excellent in himself, and better to us than any or all other things can possibly be, so we cannot but vehemently desire and earnestly endeavour to have a right to and an interest in him. It will be our highest ambition to be knit and united to him so far as we are capable in this life, by faith, and hope, and love, by the most dutiful affection, and an entire resignation to his will.

Now upon this true estimate, and steady deliberate choice of G O D, as the first and chiefest good, and so our last end and supreme felicity, and the consequent desire of being made happy by our near relation to him, and by the communications of his love and favour to us, we cannot but judge it our nearest concern, and the most worthy employment of our time, of our parts, and of our whole selves, so to serve and to please him in all things, as that we may be accepted by him, and be received and admitted into the honour and privilege of his servants, friends and children.

And this our desire to please G O D will manifest it self more generally in a constant, cheerful, uniform obedience to all his commands.

Our

Our regular conformity of our whole Lives, of all our main designs and aims and actions to the Law of GOD, is made the standard and test by which only we can prove the truth and sincerity of our love to him in the holy Scriptures. *He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, saith our Lord.* And this is the love of GOD, that we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous: They are not heavy, burthenfome, and uneasy to those who love GOD. CHRIST's yoke is an easy, gracious, merciful and pleasant yoke to all his true Disciples: 'Tis their joy and their Crown of rejoicing; not a load or burthen, but a great privilege and advantage. 'Tis their greatest pleasure, their meat and drink to do their Lord's will, and finish the work he hath given them to do in the world.

This our love to GOD will also engage us in a constant hearty endeavour to be as like to GOD, to resemble him as far as we any way can, in the temper and disposition of our Souls, and in pursuing and promoting the same ends and designs in the World, which he doth.

And indeed we can by no other way so clearly demonstrate the great value and esteem we have for GOD, nor so significantly acknowledge the excellency and perfections of his Nature, as by striving to transcribe and copy out those we are capable of imitating into our own. For thus do we most effectually endeavour and successfully labour to recover that original Image

Image of GOD, in which he at first created man.

Now this image of, and likeness to GOD, in and after which man was created, as it consists in that immortal spirit, and in those superior powers or faculties of understanding and will, whereby we are capable of knowing and serving GOD here, and of enjoying him for ever; so doth that image also include, or suppose the true natural state or perfection, and the right use or management of such our powers, whereby GOD hath been pleased to dignifie and enoble our primitive nature.

Such are a clear, true, and exact judgment in discerning aright and distinguishing moral good and evil; rectitude of the will, or its due conformity in all its elections to the reason of things, and to the mind and will of GOD; the good government, or due application of all our affections and passions to their proper objects; and keeping them within their natural bounds prescribed by reason and religion.

And this image of GOD in which *Adam* was created, being defaced by the corruption of our nature, and by the defection of our Souls from GOD, and our love of the Creatures more than the Creator, and seeking our happiness in them rather than in GOD, we can no way better demonstrate the sincerity and truth of our love to GOD, and of our desire to please him, than by a constant care and restless endeavour to recover again that divine image by spiritual regeneration.

And

And certainly this reparation of our sunk and decayed nature, and restitution of our rational faculties to their true and proper use, and to that likeness to their great original with which they came out of GOD's hands, must be highly pleasing to him, since the effecting and procuring that happiness to man, was the very purpose and end for which he sent his only begotten Son into the World.

And consequently hereto the Gospel-state, in and by which we are taught, encouraged, and obliged to be holy and perfect or merciful, as GOD is holy, that is, after his example, is described by our being born again, or being born from above, without which no man can see the Kingdom of GOD; by being born of the Spirit, by being born of GOD. All which phrases do manifestly import our receiving from GOD such a new principle of spiritual and divine life, as may enable us to bear such resemblance to GOD in the temper of our minds, as children usually bear to their parents in the lineaments of their bodies, and frequently too in their natural inclinations, as well as in the customs and habits, whether of virtue or vice.

And St. Paul tells us, that all those who have been taught by CHRIST, as the truth is in JESUS, that is, all who love GOD and their blessed Saviour in truth, as the Gospel teaches and requires, must be, and are renewed in the Spirit of their minds, and do put on the new man, which after GOD is created in righteousness and true holiness. And again

Col. III. 10

Joh. III. 3

Ver. 6, 8.

1 Joh. V. 1.

Ver. 18.

III. IX. 11

Eph. IV. 23;

24.

again he affirms, that all such have put on
 Col. III. 10. *the new man which is renewed in knowledge,*
 or unto knowledge, that is, by receiving
 and obeying the doctrine of CHRIST, de-
 claring GOD's will to us, *after the image*
of him that created him.

But if we love GOD as we ought, we
 shall not only endeavour to resemble him
 as far as we are able, in the disposition
 of our minds, in making such a true judg-
 ment of things, and in that love to, and
 practice of truth and justice, and of good-
 ness and mercifulness which are so essenti-
 al to, and inseparable from the divine na-
 ture; but we shall also imitate him in pro-
 pounding to our selves, and constantly
 pursuing the same ends and designs in the
 World which GOD doth.

Now 'tis the apparent design of Almight-
 ty GOD, both in the creation, and in the
 government of the World, by his Laws and
 by his Providence, and in the redemption
 of mankind by his Son, to promote and
 advance his own glory and honour, by
 such communications of his goodness to
 his creatures, as they were made capable
 of, and would be made happy by. *This*
 IC. XLIII. 21. *people have I formed for my self, saith the*
Lord of the Jews, they shall shew forth my
praise; which is true of all mankind, in
 their original state and capacities for hap-
 piness, and for that holiness or religion
 which leads to, and is ever in conjuncti-
 on with man's true felicity.

And the whole evangelical dispensation
 or preaching of the Gospel, is yet more
 ef-

especially designed to shew forth the riches of the grace of GOD in the recovery of lost fallen man, and in redeeming him from that sin and that misery which he had plunged himself into, by his revolting from, and disobedience to his Creator.

If then we do heartily love GOD, we cannot but vigorously endeavour, in our place and in our station, and according to our abilities and opportunities, to act and to be like to him, in thus seconding and promoting the great and worthy purposes of Almighty Wisdom and Goodness, in seeking the welfare, and setting forward, above all things, the spiritual good and the salvation of all men: for thus we do bring honour and glory to GOD, in setting up his kingdom not only in our own Souls, but also in the Souls of other men, and so procuring their everlasting happiness by all those ways and means we possibly can, as well as our own.

And indeed this ardent desire and constant endeavour to imitate the great Author of our Being, in the temper of our minds, and in all our more important designs and management of our selves, is so natural and so necessary an effect of our love to him, that it is by the more refined Heathen as well as Christian Philosophers made to be the very essence, soul and life of all true and manly Religion.

Religion, say they, is in substance nothing else but such an imitation of GOD as man is capable of, in this state of mortality. And again, *Religion* is the recovery of that proper

proper and original rectitude and happiness, which brings man back again to the resemblance of GOD.

And it was a receiv'd maxim among the wisest and most judicious Pagan Moralists, that men honoured GOD, and so loved him too, in the best manner, when they took most care to resemble him in all his imitable perfections, and were most nearly transformed into the divine nature; that GOD was not so much honoured by mens offering Sacrifice, or giving any thing to him, as by their making themselves as worthy and capable, as they possibly could, to receive from him.

Certain it is, that the more we do know, and esteem, and love GOD, the more we shall strive to be like him; and the more we are like to him, the more ardently still we shall love him. Likeness in any kind is, we know, both the foundation and the most strong cement of love and mutual affection and good will.

And then this our love to GOD, and earnest desire and study to be as like to him as we are capable of being, will produce in us a joyful hope in him, and a delightful sense of our own happiness in such our resemblance of him, and our relation to him thereby; when we find in our selves that we are thus *followers* or *imitators* of GOD, as his own dear Children.

This sensible effect of our dutiful affection to GOD, and of his especial favour and kindness to us, will farther yet warrant and engage us to place all our trust on him,

as

as our only support and defence, our sure stay and refuge. We shall firmly rely upon his goodness and wisdom and power, and upon the Truth of his promises to bestow upon us, who are his friends and children, whatever he knows to be best for us, in order to our true and lasting happiness; and to save us from, or deliver us out of any evil which might befall us.

For this care which we take to obey and to please and to resemble him, makes it evident to our selves and to others, that we are in a state of reconciliation and friendship with GOD, when we strive to be holy, and merciful, and perfect in our scantling and proportion; when we live and act by the same measures, and for the same ends that GOD doth, when we exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the Earth, in which things GOD himself delights, as he declares by his Prophet. Jer. IX. 24:

If then, as I said, we do love GOD above all things, and do above all things labour to please and to resemble him, and for all the same reasons do look upon him as our best friend, and the great and only Author of all our true felicity, we shall then not only firmly rely upon and trust in him, but we shall also place our highest satisfaction in his favour, and in his love and kindness to us, which is better than life it self. We shall ever delight our selves in Psalm the Lord, who thus already doth, and shall XXXVII, 4: trust in him, that he will give us the desires of our hearts.

†

Now

Now to delight our selves in the Lord, and to rejoyce always in him, is to have our minds possessed with such a constant habitual sense of his great Goodness to us, and of the near relation we stand in to him, and the interest we have in him, as fills our hearts with an overflowing joy and pleasure and comfort, whenever we reflect upon him as our GOD and our Father, and upon our selves, as being his faithful servants, friends, and children.

All true delight and pleasure is most naturally and rationally founded in our having an indefeasible right and title to, or in being actually in possession of what is truly good for us, and profitable or advantageous to us. Now GOD (as hath been often said) is the chief good in himself; and he alone is able to make us truly happy, both here and to all Eternity: And he is also, or may be more assuredly ours, than any other thing can be. For he is by his own promise in the Christian Covenant, *our* GOD, that is, the Author of all good to us. He is not only *our shield and our guide unto death*, but *our exceeding great reward*, the now unconceivable happiness and joy of our Souls to an endless Eternity. The due consideration then of this our happy condition at present, in having Almighty Power and Goodness and Wisdom thus engaged on our behalf, and for our good here in this life, and the Christian assurance we have, or may have, if we are not wanting to our selves, that we shall be for ever happy in the Kingdom of GOD and CHRIST;

CHRIST, must needs afford every sincere, wise and faithful servant and child of GOD, more solid, rational satisfaction and pleasure, than any, or all of these perishing, transitory things put together, can possibly do.

And thus now we see that to delight our selves in GOD, is frequently and feelingly to reflect upon him as our GOD, as our sovereign Good, as the only true happiness and center of rest to our immortal Spirits, as our last and great end, our only hope, our only valuable treasure, and in a Word, *our all*; all that we can wish for and desire in this World, or in that to come. And in consequence hereto, to delight our selves in GOD, must be to set our whole Heart and Soul, and our most ardent and vigorous affections upon him, as the Men of this World, the Children of this generation, set their Hearts upon those poor, fading, transitory things, which they do most value, do most eagerly pursue, and do most value themselves upon their having or possessing them.

And indeed as Religion, (which is in the life and power of it the due application of our selves to GOD, and our nearest approach to, and conjunction with him, by our studied conformity to his nature and will, and to his laws and designs in the World,) is the glory and honour, the prerogative and truest happiness of humane nature, and that which chiefly distinguishes us from, and exalts us above the beasts that perish (many of which are both more

wise and more happy than those wretched men who live in the neglect, or defiance of that GOD who made them) so is this delight and joy in GOD, the staying or resting of our minds upon GOD, and that perfect Peace, in which he keeps them who thus trust in him, and commit the keeping of their Souls to him in well-doing, the highest perfection, and the true state of the Christian Religion.

Isa. XXVI. 3.

1 Pet. IV. 9.

Gen. V. 22,
24.

Heb. XI.

Ver. 6.

This inward grateful sense, and habitual joy and delight in the love and favour of GOD to us, and a constant care to please him, is most properly that *walking with GOD*, which is affirmed of Enoch, before GOD took him, and he was not; which the Author of the epistle to the Hebrews expounds by Enoch's *pleasing GOD*, viz. by that Faith by which he was translated, that he should not see death. And this Faith, without which 'tis impossible, he faith, to please GOD, or to come to GOD, is, as it there follows, a belief that GOD is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Now this Faith of Enoch, his thus *walking with GOD*, that is, agreeably to his mind and will, his living always as under his eye, and in a constant pleasing sense of GOD, as of his best friend, and behaving himself as in so great a presence, was his Heaven upon Earth. And his thus *seeing him who is invisible*, was the best preparative we can imagine for, if not the reason in part of GOD's translating him by such an extraordinary mark of his favour, without his tasting death, immediately from Earth to Heaven.

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SUNDAY XII.

Of fearing GOD, and its effects in good men. All Duelling wholly inconsistent therewith. A bare settled resolution to revenge Affronts and Injuries, or to comply with that unchristian practice upon any account, tho' never executed, is an interpretative renouncing of CHRIST, and of salvation by him. The desperate Impiety, Folly, and Cowardice of thus fearing men more than GOD, plainly represented. Of honouring GOD, by praying to him, praising him, &c. The general Reasons, and more particular obligations of Christians to this great duty. Of honouring GOD, by worshiping him daily in our Families. Motives to Family-prayer.

AS we must love GOD with all our hearts, &c. that is, as much as we possibly can, and must esteem and endeavour to resemble him, and desire to please him, and to be beloved by him, and to enjoy him in Heaven, more than we do any other thing; so must we fear him above all things too.

We must labour to have our minds always possessed with such an awful sense of the majesty, the power, and the justice of GOD, as may make us infinitely careful

never to offend him by any wilful transgression of any of his Laws; that so we may neither expose our selves to his displeasure at the present, nor to that most intolerable and endless misery, which will be the portion of all those who fear not the great King, and the Judge of all men; in whose presence we always are, and who sees not only our actions, but observes the most secret designs and thoughts of our hearts.

And this filial fear, joined with our true love to GOD, will set us above all temptations to comply with any of the false maxims and sinful customs of those wretched men, in all whose thoughts GOD is not, nor have they his fear before their eyes, how great soever their numbers may be, or the figure they make in this loose, degenerate age, and low ebb of the truly Christian Religion.

No man who truly fears GOD will or can be prevailed upon, by any motive from the fear of men, or false shame, or any prospect of worldly advantage, to be carried down to Hell and eternal perdition, by that universal torrent of irreligion and profaneness, of scepticism and infidelity, of impurity, intemperance, of injustice and oppression, of an inordinate, predominant love of this World, and gross, palpable neglect of GOD and of his Laws, and of all the promises and threatnings of the Gospel, which hath over-run the once Christian World, and left us the name only without the power and life of
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that holy Religion. No man who fears GOD will thus go to Hell for company, in the broad way which certainly leads thither.

No man therefore, who fears GOD in earnest, is capable of such a cowardly fear of man, tho' it were of all the wicked and senseless men of the World, as *to revenge* deliberately, and upon consideration, or but *to resolve to revenge* the greatest affront or injury that can be offered him, either to gratifie an impotent passion, or to maintain a false reputation among bad men, with the apparent hazard, and highly probable actual damnation either of his own or of his brother's Soul.

And in consequence of these undoubted principles of our Religion, we cannot but with shame and horror too reflect upon, and lament that universal decay of the Christian Life or sincere Piety, which is so evidently visible in such great numbers of persons of *figure* and *distinction*, by their *Birth* or *Titles*, or by their *employments*, or by their *estates*, who are styled men of *quality*, and men of *honour*, as in too many other instances, so particularly in that heathenish maxim, and most unchristian resolution they profess to live by, and do often die in, *viz.* That they must and will disobey, and so too affront and dishonour their GOD and their Saviour in the highest manner, and that they must and will sacrifice their brother's, and their own Souls too, to the Devil, rather than put up the slightest injury or contumely, a box on the Ear, or the lie, given them

by a rash and foolish man, rather than refuse a challenge upon any such account, and so be wanting to what is falsely called and goes for *Reputation* amongst those only who fear men more than they do GOD.

Now that this conduct is the most *damnable Cowardice*, (to speak in their language) as well as the most childish and unthinking piece of *folly*, will appear, if we consider that true *courage* and manly *valour* differ from the rage of beasts and mad-men, and from the most stupid fool-hardiness, much more in their principle, and the reason on which they are grounded, than in the bare outward act; since a well-bred *Mastiff* hath as much intrepidity, or is as fearless of danger, and as unconcerned in it, as the greatest *General* or *Conqueror* that ever made most noise and most havock in the World.

True fortitude therefore, that it may differ from fool-hardiness, and from the natural invincible courage of a Bull-dog, must, as well as all other moral virtues and habits, be directed and governed, as they are, by prudence or right *reason*.

Now as speculative Atheism is the most apparent folly to every man who reflects either upon his own original and his first coming into being, or upon that of all other things without him; so practical Atheism, that is, for a man who believes there is a GOD, to live, and to act as if he were sure there was no GOD, and in this case we are now speaking of, to prefer the judgment of those foolish men, who

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themselves most evidently want all common sense, to the positive express commands of his Creator and Lord, and thus to fear such worms of the Earth, who shall perish in a few moments, more than him who can and will make all such miscreants miserable for ever, is yet an higher pitch and exaltation, if it be possible, of the most senseless folly or madness; and it is withal the most shameful and most truly infamous cowardice any man can be guilty of.

For the true reason why giving a man the lie is esteemed so heinous, and so unpardonable an affront and indignity, is, as a witty Writer well observes, because to say that a man lies, is to say in effect, that he is brave, stout and bold, or fool-hardy, rather towards GOD, and a pitiful coward towards men, whom he fears more than GOD.

And now is not every man this false brave, and true coward, who despises the great GOD, out of regard to, and out of fear of those poor animals in humane shape, who have so little of the understanding of men, and so much of the pride of Devils, as impiously to prefer their will to that of their Creator, and the Lord of all?

For this is the plain case of that wretch who chuses to defie the tremendous Majesty of Heaven and Earth, by breaking his Laws, and destroying his image, by the design'd wilful murder of his brother, or of himself, or of both, rather than to expose himself to the laughter of fools and

mad-men, for having that *true courage and good sense*, which such brutes of men so evidently want, and who will pay so very dear for such their folly to all eternity.

Nay farther, we cannot doubt but that a bare *resolution* and purpose not to *forgive*, but to *revenge* an injury, and to seek that *false honour* which the worst and weakest of men give to, and receive from one another, rather than that *true honour* that cometh from *G O D* only, tho' a man should never have an occasion of committing such murder as he resolves not to stick at in that case, is such a degree of infidelity and impiety, such an effectual renouncing of all obedience to *G O D* and to *CHRIST*, as makes that man as incapable of entering into the Kingdom of *G O D*, as if he had formally and in expresse words, or by any overt-act, denied the Christian Faith, and turn'd Jew or Mahometan.

For he who lives and dies in a settled resolution, not to deny himself in an instance of this nature, for fear of those, who being despisers of *G O D* are for that reason the most despicable of all men, in the account of *G O D*, who is the true fountain of honour; he who refuses to take up his Cross, and to follow our Lord in his meekness, patience, and forgiveness of his enemies, is palpably *ashamed of CHRIST*, and of his Words, that is, of his commands; and our Lord himself assures us, that *he will be ashamed of every such man*, that is, that he will reject and condemn him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy Angels.

And

And he who designs and purposes to commit Robbery, or Sacrilege, or any Murder, or any other the most horrid villany, when any occasion offers, is at least in as hopeful a way to Heaven, as that man of blood who is so wholly devoid of the Love of GOD, and of his Brother, and of his own Soul, that he fully resolves to hazard, and in case of Death on either side, to secure the damnation either of his Christian Brother, or of himself, or of both, by putting one or both of them past all possibility of Repentance, and consequently past all hopes of Salvation upon the terms of the Gospel, and according to the peremptory declaration which he who is to be the Judge hath made in this matter.

Whence it evidently follows, that no Christian can engage in a *Duel* upon any account whatever, or can resolve so to do, either to revenge any affront or injury, or to maintain that false reputation which the World that lies in wickedness so calls, without forfeiting all pretence to that Salvation, which the Gospel promises to those only who believe and who obey our Lord; who so expressly commands us to love and to forgive our Enemies, and to do good to them that hate us and despitefully use us; and to fear him only who can cast both Body and Soul into Hell.

However common this pernicious maxim and false notion of Honour may be in this unchristian Age, certain it is, that nothing can more unqualify any man for the favour of GOD, and for the Kingdom of Heaven;

ven; nor can any man take a surer way to secure to *himself* the endless torments of Hell, as well as to his *Brother*; whom if he sends thither before him, he seldom, if ever, fails to follow into the same place and company. For indeed no man can easily arrive at this desperate height of impiety, and resolved deliberate defiance of his Maker and his Judge, till by his *not liking to retain G O D in his knowledge*, and *despising that Goodness of his which should lead him to Repentance*, he is by G O D's just award given over to a *reprobate mind*, or a mind void of Judgment.

Rom. I. 28.

And as we must thus love and fear GOD, so we must worship and honour him too; that is, we must not only have that profound inward reverence and awful regard for him in our minds, which his incomprehensible Greatness, Goodness, Power, and Authority over us, do most justly demand; but this our honouring him imports and obliges us yet farther to make such our esteem of him appear visibly to all men, by our words, and in all our actions and designs, and in the whole conduct of our lives.

Now there are several ways whereby we may, and we ought to honour G O D; that is, to make that due reverence and value which we have for him above all things to appear to others.

Thus we may and must honour G O D at all times, by a free and open Profession of his Service; by owning him for our Lord and our Master; and by demeaning our
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selves upon all occasions, as becomes those who have such a firm belief of the Promises, Threatnings and Doctrines of the Gospel, as engages them in a constant care and endeavour to obey and to please GOD in all things.

We must honour GOD also by praying to him, and by praising him in secret and in our Families every day, and in publick when we have opportunity; in having a due regard to his Day, to his Word, to his Sacraments, to his Name, to his Ministers, to his House, and to his Revenue or Possessions. For by such our repeated acts of Adoration, Prayer, Thanksgiving and Intercession, we do best keep up and maintain both in our selves, and in all others under our charge, that lively sense of GOD, and that awful reverence of his Greatness, and Glory, and Goodness, with which our minds ought always to be filled; more especially when we thus draw nigh to him, and place our selves more immediately under his Eye.

We do by such our daily devout Addresses to GOD own and celebrate, as we are able, all GOD's glorious Attributes and Perfections. We do confess him to be that Eternal, Almighty, most wise and good Being, who is the Original of all things, and the Author of all Good to all his Creatures: We own, that as we are made by him and for him, and do wholly depend upon him; so he only is, and must be our last end, and our chief Good; and that we can no other way be truly happy,

happy, save only in our relation to, and conjunction with him, by a constant steady endeavour to conform our selves to his Nature, and by an entire obedience, and resignation to his holy Will and good Pleasure in all things.

All this is the design and meaning of our daily praying to and praising G O D, as we are barely Men. 'Tis that homage we are obliged to pay him for having made us rational and intelligent Creatures, for having made us *in his own Image* and *after his Likeness*, and so consequently capable of knowing and loving, of serving and obeying our Creator here in this life, and of enjoying him for ever in that which is to come.

But now we, who are Christians, have yet many more and much greater both obligations and encouragements to worship Almighty G O D with our daily Prayers, Supplications and Thanksgivings, offered up to him on all occasions, and upon every opportunity which presents, than they who have not had the Gospel preached to them.

For that unspeakable Love of G O D reveal'd to us in the Gospel, in giving his only begotten Son to die for our Sins, that we might live for ever thro' and with him; and in sending his holy Spirit to regenerate, to guide, to assist and sanctify us, and thus to bring us to everlasting Life and happiness, doth so much exceed his barely creating us, that our whole life

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indeed should now be to our great Creator's and Redeemer's praise.

And we ought farther to consider that it is, as hath been above observed, the great design of the Christian Religion to help us to retrieve that Image of GOD in which we were at first made; and by reconciling us to GOD in the temper of our minds, and by our constant obedience to his Laws, to fit and prepare us here in this present Life for the enjoyment of him in that life which will never end.

Whence it follows, that we ought, by the frequent assent of our Souls, and by our thus drawing nigh to GOD in Prayers and Thanksgivings, more and more to refine and to spiritualize our natures, and to raise up our thoughts and aims above the little concerns of this short life, and so to fix our minds and hearts unalterably upon the only true object of rational choice, the sovereign Good, viz, that GOD who made us for himself, and for that everlasting Happiness which our Lord and Saviour CHRIST hath again made us capable of, if we believe and obey him in all things.

Let no Man then pretend to be a Christian, or indeed a Man, that is, a reasonable Creature, who can live in the constant neglect, or can content himself with a cold, formal, careless performance of so natural and necessary a duty as is that of daily praying to, and praising that GOD who made

made and preserves him, and who gives him all the good things he enjoys.

And since every Master of a Family is for a much stronger reason obliged to take care of the Souls of his Children and his Servants, than to provide for their Bodies, and is in some measure accountable to GOD for their miscarriage, if it happen thro' his Fault; every such Person, even the meanest as well as the greatest, ought to take care that GOD be worshiped daily Morning and Evening in his Family by all under his charge.

For which end some good form of Prayer for a Family, or at least the two daily Morning and the two Evening Collects of our Church, with some other of them, may easily be learned by heart, and may be devoutly repeated by some Person in an House where none can read; that so no Christian Family may be so ignorant, poor, and miserable, as not to have GOD mentioned and served therein, but as it were shut out by them.

Now this our daily solemn Address to GOD, together with all under our roof, (which little Assembly may then be styled, *The Church that is in our House*;) may in some measure supply that constant attendance on the daily publick Service, which cannot easily, to be sure will not be given by all Persons in most Families.

And our thus making the worship of GOD morning and evening in our own Houses, the most serious and indispensable part of the business of every day, will keep

keep up such a Spirit of Piety and Devotion, and such a due sense of our dependance upon GOD, of the great obligations we have to him, and of the duty and obedience we owe him, as will naturally influence the practice of all those who are thus well employed together some part of each day.

It will lay some kind of restraint too even on those who are worst inclined; who will be every day put in mind at least of GOD, and of the care they ought to take to please him, in order to escape the damnation of Hell; and will be the best means to implant, and then to settle, fix and increase all good dispositions and Christian graces and virtues in all both our Children and Servants.

And if our Children and Servants have their hearts and souls thus early turned towards GOD, and are thus taught and accustomed to live with such due regard to, and remembrance of him, and so are his Children and Servants too, we shall have much more duty and service from them for their own sakes, and out of a sense of the obligation their Religion lays upon them, and reminds them of.

I will only farther add, that we may reasonably hope by such our example to entail, if I may so say, the great blessing of Religion upon our Families; and to leave such a tincture and heaven of Piety, and of all Christian graces and virtues, as may be successively transmitted to our latest Posterity: And we may by this means
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be made the happy instruments of GOD's Glory in our succeeding Generations, and of the Salvation of those who are yet unborn.

The too common habitual neglect of this great duty of Family-devotion, as well as of secret, and of the publick Prayers, is doubtless one of the chief causes of the general decay of true Piety, and of the growth of that atheism and prophaneness, of that unbelief and immorality, which hath in effect unchristen'd that part of the World which is still called Christian; tho' so little of the true Spirit of that Religion, and of that holiness the Gospel requires, is now to be found in it.

We may farther consider, that the Promise of our Saviour's being present, in a more especial manner, viz. that he would be in the midst of two or three gathered together in his Name, and that what two shall agree to ask, shall be done for them; intimates at least, that tho' he is always ready to hear, and to assist the secret Prayers of every devout Soul, yet the united Prayers of a Family, or greater number, met together in his fear, and with faith and hope in his Mediation, are more acceptable and more prevalent with GOD, than those of single Persons in their solitary devotions.

Mat. XVIII.
19, 20.

For altho' it must be confessed, that this Argument is yet a stronger motive for our frequenting the more publick Worship of GOD in our daily assemblies in his House, and for much greater numbers meeting there, yet it may be very reasonably

ably apply'd to, and hath its force and weight too proportionably in the united Prayers of the whole Family.

But however useful and necessary it may be to worship GOD, both in our Closets, and in our Families, and thereby to keep up a lively sense of GOD's great goodness to us, and of our dependance upon him, and of the Duty we owe to him, both in our own hearts, and in all theirs that are under our care and government; yet it must be owned, that the daily publick Worship of GOD with our Christian Brethren, in his own House, is still more useful where it can be had. And that not only because it may be presumed more prevalent, having proportionably more title to the Promise of our Lord's more especial presence with two or three only gathered together in his Name; but also because it is more for GOD's Honour, and more for our own advantage, and for the good of others, than our private or Family-devotion can be upon several accounts, which I shall next consider.

IN US THAT we Christians are obliged to engage ourselves with constantly attending the daily publick Prayers of the Church, where we have the opportunity, and no good reason to the contrary, will plainly

SUNDAY XIII.

Of Honouring GOD by conscientiously frequenting the daily publick Prayers of the Church. *Motives to publick Worship.* It seems chiefly intended in some general Texts of the holy Scriptures. It makes most for the Honour of GOD, and of Religion. Is most for our own Advantage. Employs some part of each Day in the very best manner, and to the best account. Obliges us to more exemplary Lives, and so to greater proficiency in Holiness. Is the nearest Representation of the Heavenly State. Good Example to others. And the prevalence of united Prayers for the Church and State. We therein best comply with the practice of the Apostles, and of the most primitive Churches, and Apostolical Constitutions; Universal Custom in the purest Ages; with the Orders of our own Church, and the Laws of the Land.

THAT we Christians are obliged to charge our selves with constantly attending the daily publick Prayers of the Church, where we have the opportunity, and no good reason to the contrary, will plainly

plainly appear from a due consideration, both of the *nature* and *design* of our Religion; and also of those frequent *Commands* we have relating to this matter in the holy Scripture; all of which are best comply'd with by our so doing.

Our Blessed Lord spake a Parable to this end, That *men ought always to pray, and not to faint*, that is, we ought not to be remiss and slothful; but to be constant, diligent, intent upon, and fervent in this great duty of Prayer, upon all occasions we can find, or reasonably make, by good management of our selves. Luke XVIII. 1.

And St. Paul seconds this Advice of our Lord, *Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of GOD in CHRIST JESUS concerning you.* That is, the constant and frequent lifting up our Souls to GOD in Prayer and Praises, is highly suitable to the design and end of our Religion; which we know is to spiritualize our natures, and to raise up our Souls from Earth to Heaven, and so to fit us for nearer approaches to, and closer union with GOD. 1 Thes. V. 17, 18.

And thus it appears, that Prayer and Thanksgiving in general is a substantial considerable part of that employment or duty, to which we are more especially obliged as we are Christians; and praying and giving Thanks at all times without ceasing, is that will and pleasure of GOD which is revealed to us by our blessed Lord. And now since publick Prayers have certainly much the advantage of

all others, in order to these great and worthy ends, they must be chiefly here intended.

Eph. VI. 18. St. Paul again advises us to be praying always, the Words properly signify in the original, at every season, or upon every occasion, or on every opportunity, with all prayer, and supplication in the Spirit, and to watch thereunto with all perseverance. I ex-

hort, saith this Apostle, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all Men, Kings, &c. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of GOD our Saviour. And I will therefore that men pray every where. All which places are, in the judgment of some of the best Divines, both Foreigners and of our own Nation, thought to be most properly apply'd to the daily publick Worship of GOD, for the above mentioned reasons.

And St. Paul speaks yet more expressly to our purpose, That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify GOD even the Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST. And unto

Eph. III. 2. him (that is to GOD) be Glory in the Church by JESUS CHRIST throughout all Ages, World without end. In the Church, that is most literally and plainly in the daily publick Meetings or Assemblies of Christian People, who are the Church of CHRIST united and met together to worship their common Lord and Saviour.

Now although most or all of these places of holy Scripture, may and do oblige us to worship GOD in our Families, and

and in our Closets, as well as in publick ; yet since the *daily publick worship* of GOD best answers all the *ends* of such our addresses to him, it must be owned that we are more especially for that reason obliged, as well in regard to the *Honour of GOD*, as in *Christian Prudence and Charity*, to frequent the daily publick Prayers of our Church as often as we have opportunity, and can find or make leisure so to do.

But to speak somewhat more particularly to these general Heads. Our thus serving GOD every day in his own House, the *House of Prayer*, is to be much preferr'd before any private Devotions, and so more necessary, where it can be reasonably performed ; because it makes more for the *Honour* and for the *Glory* of GOD, and of his holy Religion, as well as brings more *advantage* both to our selves, and to that Church and State of which we are Members.

We do indeed *worship* GOD at home ; but since our giving *Honour* and *Glory* and *Praise* are most properly outward and publick expressions of that inward value and regard we have for those we most esteem, we cannot be so properly said to *honour* and to *glorify* GOD in our Houses, as in his own. For we do then more eminently and visibly *give him the Honour due unto his Name*, and *make his Praise to be glorious*, when we pray unto him, and praise him in the great Assembly, and before much People.

For by this daily publick Worship, we do the best we possibly can both to express, and farther to imprint upon our own minds, the high thoughts and most worthy apprehensions we have, and all men ought to have, of GOD's transcendent Majesty, Wisdom, Power, and Goodness; who ought therefore to be frequently celebrated by the *united* hearts and voices of the whole race of Mankind, as the *universal* Parent, Preserver and Governor of all, in the most *publick manner*, and with the greatest solemnity.

We do also most properly and significantly *serve* GOD, and strive to promote his Interest, if we may so speak, at least his *Honour* and his *Glory*, by keeping up or exciting such a lively sense of his Being, and of his adorable Perfections, in the hearts of all such as are witnesses of that open and avowed Homage we do thus pay him every day.

It may provoke others to have some due regard to GOD, when they observe such great numbers of Men and Women, (as we do rather wish and hope for, than see at present) who esteem it the best business, and the most profitable and agreeable employment of their time, to wait upon GOD in his Sanctuary; and thus to make their court to, or to own their dependance upon him, and their obligations to him, and the expectations they have from this great King and Lord of all the Monarchs in the World.

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Now as GOD is most highly honoured by the daily publick Worship; so we our selves may and do receive the greatest advantages thereby, in all our capacities, We may be sure that we do spend so much of every day in the very best manner, and to the wisest purposes, and so as that it will turn most to our good, at the great Audit of the last day.

For certainly no particular will stand fairer in that Account of our time, which we must then give to Almighty GOD, than this *Item*, So much laid out every day when we had opportunity, in the publick Worship and Service of our great Lord and Master.

We do hereby likewise as it were begin Heaven here whilst we are on Earth. In our being thus united both to one another, and to that blessed Choir, in celebrating the divine Majesty with our joint Prayers and Thanksgivings, we do in some measure enter upon the life, and the state, and the employment of the holy Angels, and of all the Host of Heaven.

And we most certainly then do our selves most good, when we most readily and fully comply with the end of our Creation; which was, to serve and to glorify GOD in the best and most acceptable manner we are able. So that now we see the most constant and most publick Worship of GOD, in Spirit and in Truth, is the most perfect anticipation, and as it were foretast of that happy life

we hope to lead in the Presence of GOD, and of our blessed Saviour for evermore.

Another advantage of frequenting the daily publick Worship is, that we are more like to obtain whatever we ask, and stand in need of, from and by the united Prayers of a whole Christian Congregation put up every day for themselves and for others, than by our own single Petitions.

For that more especial Presence, and greater Effect, which our Lord promises to two or three met together, over and above one man's private Devotion, as was before hinted, will certainly bear the same proportion, and be equally more available, when so many hundreds or greater numbers are gathered together in his Name, and do thus agree to ask of his and their heavenly Father, those things only which most tend to the Honour and Glory of GOD, the setting up and promoting the Kingdom of CHRIST, and the Salvation of those Souls, which our blessed Lord hath purchased by his Death and Passion, and still assists, rules and manages by his holy Spirit.

I farther add, that as our thus making conscience of approaching to GOD in his House every day, is a great help and effectual means to produce and raise all pious dispositions in our Souls, and in particular a sincere Love to GOD, and to our Christian Brethren, with whom we so frequently converse, upon the very best accounts, and to the noblest purposes; so it lays an

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indispensable obligation upon us to lead more holy and more heavenly lives than other Christians commonly do; to be more humble, meek and patient, more useful, more unblameable and unproveable, more exemplary in all our conversation.

Certainly he who doth not charge himself with the diligent practice of all that strict Sobriety, Righteousness, and Godliness, which he there expressly and openly prays for, or who disparages that publick worship which he professes to love, by any unsuitable behaviour, hath great reason to suspect himself of hypocrisie and insincerity, even in his private as well as in his publick devotions; and he ought to think himself to be so much a worse man than others are, by how much he appears to be better, by shewing more zeal for GOD's glory, and falsely pretending to more care to please and to serve him than other men have.

We may farther yet consider, that Almighty GOD was pleased to ordain and settle the *daily publick worship* of himself, under the old Law: for he commands, *That a Lamb should be offered in the Morning, and another in the Evening, day by day continually.* And this shall be, saith GOD, *a continual Burnt-offering throughout your generations.* Exod. XXIX. 38, 39. Ver. 48.

Now this *daily service* being to be performed by them only at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation before the Lord, and afterwards only at the Temple in Jerusalem, it was not possible that the whole

whole Nation of the *Jews*, or any very considerable part of it, could be there present every day: but to come as near to this as it might be, a certain number of men were chosen out of the whole people of *Israel*, *Viri plurimum à peccatis abhorrentes*, men of the most blameless lives, and who were of exemplary holiness, to be the Substitutes and Representatives of all their Tribes, the peoples Legates or Embassadors, as they were styled by the Rabbins, and as such they were to assist in their several regular courses at the daily Morning and Evening Sacrifice.

And these daily morning and evening Sacrifices, thus attended by these Deputies or Representatives of the whole Church of the *Jews*, were accompanied always with solemn publick thanksgivings for all GOD's mercies vouchsafed to them, and with prayers for the continuance of his protection and blessing to their whole Nation.

Besides which, the *Jews* had their Synagogues in most Towns and frequented places, wherein they met at the same hours at which those daily sacrifices were offered, to join their Prayers and Praises also with those of their Delegates, and to have some part of the Law read to them.

And we may farther yet observe, with relation to this matter, that GOD promises his more immediate presence and blessing to them at the place and time of this their publick worship. And there I will meet with the Children of *Israel*, saith GOD, and

Exod. XXIX.
43.

the Tabernacle (or Israel, as the Margin hath it) shall be sanctified by my glory, and I will dwell among the Children of Israel, and will be their GOD. Exod. XXIX. 45.

Now certainly no tolerable reason can be given, why Christians should be less obliged to the *daily publick worship* of GOD, than the *Jews*, as we find, were by such his exprefs command. But there are very many reasons why we Christians, as we are such, should think our selves more obliged to honour and to glorifie GOD, and to praise him, and to pray to him every day in the most *publick and solemn manner*; since this is both most suitable to the more *spiritual nature* of our holy Religion, and to those clearer *manifestations* of himself, and of his great goodness and mercy in the redemption of mankind, which GOD hath made to us in the Gospel of his Son.

Thus we find the Apostles, after their return from *Bethany*, where they had been eye-witnesses of the Ascension of our Lord, to *Jerusalem*, to have been continually in the Temple, praising and blessing GOD, that is, they went daily to the Temple at the usual times, or hours of Prayer, Morning and Evening. Luke XXIV. 53.

And we are, we know, commanded to pray every where, that is, (as both ancient and modern interpreters agree) in all Churches or Places set a-part for the publick worship of GOD, which is not confined now to any one place, as the Jewish Sacrifices were to the Temple. We are com- 1 Tim. II. 8.

XIX.

commanded, as was observed, to *pray always, and without ceasing, or to pray continually*; which phrases may well import praying twice in publick every day; as that was called the *continual Burnt-offering*, which was made at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, in the name and behalf of the whole Jewish Nation, every Morning and Evening. And thus the primitive Christian Church both understood the Texts above mentioned, and practised accordingly.

For the *apostolical Constitutions*, as they are called, and which are by all allowed to be at least very ancient, do enjoin the Bishop to admonish and command the people under his charge to come *every day, both Morning and Evening, to the publick prayers*; and that none, by absenting himself, should *maim the Church*, and take away one member from the body of CHRIST, as it is there expressed, *Constit. l. 2. cap. 59.*

VIX.

3-II.

And both the *Eastern* and the *Western Churches* of CHRIST, in all ages, and almost in all Nations and places, have and do so universally understand and agree, that the *daily publick worship* of GOD is enjoined both by the Scriptures and by the very nature of a *Christian Church*, that there is scarce any nation or place of great resort, in which this pious custom is not; or hath not been constantly and religiously observed by the best and devoutest persons at least in those places.

For

For a *Christian Church* is, in its most proper and obvious notion, an *assembly of men and women met together to worship GOD by JESUS CHRIST*: Or a company joined together to have fellowship with GOD, and one with another, in all holy duties; of which prayers, praises, and thanksgivings, daily offered up in GOD's house, are some of the chief. Which argument, with some others, they who desire farther satisfaction in a matter so plain to all unprejudiced minds, may find very largely and convincingly handled in a discourse concerning Prayer, especially of frequenting the daily publick Prayers, written some time since by the pious and learned Doctor *Patrick*, the late right reverend Bishop of *Ely*.

And the pious wisdom of our Church hath, in conformity to this primitive and almost universal judgment and practice of the Christian World, by an ecclesiastical constitution, provided and enjoined, That the Curate in every Parish, being at home, and not being otherwise reasonably hindred, should say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer in the Parish-Church or Chapel where he ministrETH. Which ecclesiastical constitution or order is now, with the rest of the Book of Common-prayer, passed into a Law by the civil legislative Power of the Nation.

Now it being farther ordered by the same authority, that the Minister shall cause a bell to be tolled a convenient time before he begins the Service, 'tis very evident to every one

one who is not resolved to shut his eyes against so bright a truth, that every person who is not reasonably hindered, is as much obliged, both from the reason of the thing, that is, for all the reasons above alledged, and out of obedience to this order, to come to hear GOD's word read, and to pray with the Minister twice every day, as the Minister is bound to officiate in his respective Care, where any number are wise enough and good enough to make any, tho' but a small congregation.

1 Pet. II.

Heb. XIII.
15.

Now if we farther consider, that GOD was pleased to enjoin that gross and carnal people of the Jews, who were a Type only of the more perfect Church of CHRIST, to worship him publicly every Morning and Evening in their manner, and that we Christians are, from the more spiritual nature of our holy Religion, all now made a royal Priesthood, and an holy Nation; we must needs grant, that GOD may well require from us to offer up the christian Sacrifice of Praise to him continually, i. e. the fruit of our Lips, giving thanks to his Name every day in our publick assemblies; as he formerly did require the legal sacrifices of the Levitical Priests, whose business it was to perform constant daily service in such their ministrations.

And now let us give our selves the leisure fairly to weigh and to reflect upon what hath been I hope sufficiently proved, viz. that by our daily publick solemn addresses to GOD, in his own house, we do bring more honour and glory to
GOD,

GOD, than we can in our private devotions; that we do thereby bring more credit and reputation to our Religion; let us consider again, that we do hereby get more advantage to our selves, both by laying out so much of our time in the very best manner, and to the very best account, and by engaging our selves to lead more exemplary lives, and by our consequent greater proficiency in all christian graces and virtues.

Let us consider farther, that we do more good to others, as well by our example, as by the greater prevalency of our united prayers for the prosperity both of our Church and State; and that we do herein best comply with the authority and the example both of the primitive Church, and of the most eminent and celebrated Churches of CHRIST in all ages and places, and likewise with the Laws and Constitutions of our own Church.

And now if we duly consider all these great and weighty reasons, we cannot surely but prefer the daily publick worship of GOD before any other thing, affair, or business, which is not either necessary, or that is not sufficient to justify such our omission or neglect of our duty both to GOD and to our own consciences; since we are here as in all other cases, to be directed by the measures of Christian Prudence and Piety, of that love we ought to bear to our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, and of a due regard to, and care of our own immortal Souls, and
to

to the greatest good of our Christian Brethren.

And here it may be fit and proper to hint at, and to try to redress some too common faults and indecencies which we cannot but observe every day in some of our congregations.

Some perhaps devout, but very inconsidering persons, have the indiscretion to repeat not only the sentences and the exhortation before the Confession, but to repeat even the Absolution too, tho' it be expressly said just before it, that the Absolution is to be pronounced by the Priest alone.

Others either sit at the prayers, as well as at the Hymns and Psalms; or if they kneel, they put themselves into such lazie undecent postures, as they would be ashamed to use in any other place but in GOD's house; or before those persons whom they have any regard to, or consideration for, in any other place.

And too many of those who frequent our daily publick worship are so childishly inconsiderate, and so little mind what they are about, that even when their mouths are full of the praises of GOD, their eyes at the same time are foolishly misemployed in watching, and the rest of their bodies in complementing one another.

The first *Glory be to the Father, &c.* when they rise from off their knees, and the answer to it, are usually spent (I had like to have said profaned) by their very mannerly salutes on both sides. And the two former versicles of that incomparably de-

vout

vout Hymn, *We praise thee, O GOD, ---all the Earth doth worship thee,---* are just as reverently applied to such new objects as their wandering eye first meets with. Nay, it hath been, and may be observed, that some very indiscreet persons, at the naming the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, have made three distinct honours, as they call them, unwarily, I hope, to so many several Idols, as those misapplied words seem to make them.

This ill-timed civility, which becomes a Play-house better than a Church, shews very little reverence towards Almighty GOD, whom they affront, rather than serve, forgetting both him and themselves, whilst they apparently worship those Creatures, to whom they bow, more than the great Creator, whose Name they do thus take in vain in the most literal sense.

This scandalous piece of ill manners towards GOD ought to be very carefully avoided by all who fear him, and who would take care not to expose his solemn worship to the derision of Atheists and Infidels.

Some others who go for the best men of the Parish, in the common style, that is, have most money, do very often give the worst *example* to their own Children and Servants, teaching them to slight the publick worship, by laying themselves to sleep, in the Morning oftentimes, in the face of the Congregation, as if they came thither for that purpose only. These men probably never sleep any where at that

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time

time of the day, but at Church; to be sure not when they are about any gainful, or any other business, but that which seems so inconsiderable to them, *viz.* serving GOD, and taking care of their own poor miserable Souls, for which they seem less concerned than the Devil is, who is pleas'd doubtless with so hopeful a prospect.

Those also who *sit* when they sing the Psalms, tho' they always *stand* when they are read in the Church, should do well to consider, that both the one and the other being generally Prayers to, or Praises of GOD, there is the same reason for standing up at the one as there is at the other.

Talking to one another likewise in the Church, even in the time of divine Service, and those foppish, modish, affected amusements, which some who never sleep at a Play, must needs use to keep them awake at their Prayers, or hearing the Word of GOD, are visible marks that such persons want that seriousness and wakeful attention which becomes those who remember they are in so great a presence, and that they are come thither upon business which concerns them more nearly than any other can do, *viz.* the promoting the honour and the glory of GOD, and the salvation of their own Souls.

And let none now think that these things are too small, and too inconsiderable to be taken notice of in a discourse of this nature. For nothing ought to be esteemed little by us, which reflects dishonour upon GOD,

GOD, and his service, which disparages our holy Religion, and which endangers the Souls of men.

Now as all careless, irreverent, undecent, drowsie and affected behaviour in the public worship, so all customary, formal, heartless address, either in publick or private, is a manifest affront to that GOD who is the searcher of hearts, and must be *served in Spirit and in Truth*.

And thus all the bare outside Religion of those weak formalists, who suffer their eyes and their hearts to wander after other objects, when they pretend to praise or to pray to GOD with their mouths, sets them at a farther distance from him, and defiles their consciences with the guilt of hypocrisie, or a very criminal neglect of GOD, whilst *their hearts are far from him, when they draw nigh to him with their lips*. And since such prayer of the hypocrite, who indulges himself in this practice, is no less an abomination to GOD, than that of the profane and wicked man, we cannot be too plainly cautioned, nor too circumspect in a matter of so great consequence.

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SUN.

SUNDAY XIV.

Of honouring GOD by a religious observation of his day. Attendance on the worship of GOD, secret Prayer, Self-examination, and instruction of our Families, the proper employments of this day. Of honouring GOD by a due regard to his Word and Sacraments; by appealing to him as a witness of the truth of what we affirm or promise. The Sin of common Swearers. Of honouring GOD by a due regard to his Ministers, and to places, and all things set a-part for his worship, or dedicated to him.

WE must also honour GOD by a religious observance of his day, that is, of that proportion of each week, which he hath commanded to be sanctified or set apart for the more solemn worship of himself, and to be a perpetual thankful remembrance of his mercies to all mankind in the Creation of the World.

Now by keeping the Sabbath-day thus holy to the Lord, we do own our selves to be the servants of that GOD, who, having made the World in six days, blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, that is, set it apart for his own peculiar worship and service, because that in it he had rested from all his works.

Gen. II. 3.

But besides this reason which GOD was pleased to give, in the promulgation of the Law

Law

Law on Mount Sinai, to the Jews, why *Exod. XX.* they should remember the Sabbath-day, to *Jo. 11.* keep it holy, and not to do any work therein; he is pleased to add another reason peculiar to that nation, at the repetition of that Law. And remember that thou *Deur. V. 15.* wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm; therefore the Lord thy GOD commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-Day.

Now the deliverance of the Children of Israel out of that bondage they were in to the Egyptians, was an evident and significant type or shadow of that more glorious and important redemption of all sincere believers from the power and domination, and the cruel tyranny of Sin and Satan, and then from that Death and Hell which are the wages of Sin, by our Saviour JESUS CHRIST.

And our blessed Lord having finished that great work of our Redemption, by his rising again from the dead on the first day of the Jewish week, the shadow was in all reason to give place to the substance, and the figure or type to that which it did only foreshow and represent.

Hence it was that our Saviour, who is the Lord of the Sabbath, as himself affirms, *Mark* did by his own great authority, and by the reason of the thing, viz. by his appearing to his Disciples, both on that same first day of the week, on which he rose from the dead, and again, on the first day of the next week following that, and

likewise by sending down the Holy Ghost, in that most solemn manner, upon the first day of another week, at the feast of *Pentecost*, he did actually, and as it were in fact, if not by an exprefs command, of which indeed we have no record, sanctifie and set apart this our Christian Sabbath to be kept holy for ever by all his Disciples.

Rev. I. 10.

And consequently hereto we find that the Apostles, who doubtless perfectly understood the will of their Lord, and were guided by his holy Spirit in this as well as in other matters, held their most solemn religious assemblies on that day. And this Christian Sabbath, which was also called the *Lord's-Day*, hath been known by that name, and dedicated in an especial manner to his service, and in memory of his resurrection upon that day of the week, and thus kept holy by the *Catholick Church* in all ages, and in all places of the Christian World.

And since our great Creator, and gracious Lord, who gives us all things, is pleased to reserve one seventh part only of each week thus to himself, we cannot sure refuse or grudge, without being guilty of the foulest ingratitude, to cease from the works of our ordinary calling, that so we may be at leisure to attend that whole day upon him, and thankfully to commemorate, both in the Church, and in our Houses and Closets, his great goodness and mercy to us, both in his works of Creation and Providence, and especially in that of our Redemption.

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We ought indeed to look upon this holy rest as a great privilege and advantage, which is given us by GOD, to the end that we might acquaint our selves more and more with him, and with his will, and with our duty, and so may prepare our selves more and more for that eternal rest which remains for the people of GOD.

We ought therefore conscientiously to be present at, and to bear our parts in that most solemn worship and publick service of GOD, with the great congregation, both times of the day, and not without a very good reason, which neither a cold or an hot day is to those who are in health, to absent our selves at either of them; which they who do customarily, upon such poor frivolous pretences, seem to have very little love to GOD, very little care either to serve and please him, or to secure their own everlasting happiness.

For we cannot, without some degree or appearance of Sacrilege and Prophane-ness, rob GOD of that day, and of that portion of time, which he hath so expressly commanded his people to sanctifie, that is, to set a-part for himself, and for his more immediate service. And certainly our Religion obliges us Christians, both for the same and for more cogent reasons, than that more imperfect dispensation the *Israelites* were under did them, to keep this day holy.

How then can any man who pretends to be a Christian, make the *Lord's-Day* a day of Pastime, of Pleasure, and Diversion;

or only a Day of Idleness and Sloth ; or a set Day for visiting and entertaining others, without any good end to be served thereby? From which steps men come by degrees to spend all or a great part of the holy Day, as it were in defiance of the Laws both of GOD and of the Church, and of the Land too, in Gaming, Riot; or Drunkenness, and all manner of Debauchery and Sensuality. These men make it a day for the service of their Lords, the Gods whom they have chosen, that is, the Flesh, the World, and the Devil, rather than a day of rest from Sin, and a day set apart for the Honour of GOD, the Creator of the World, and their blessed Redeemer, for the care of their own immortal, tho' by them neglected and despised Souls ; or at least they make it the idlest and most unprofitable day in the whole Week.

But now all those who are so wise and so good, that is, so far Christians, that they look upon the Service of GOD, and the salvation of their own Souls, as their most important business, their true and most proper calling even in this World, and as *the one thing needful*, they do consider these weekly returns of the Christian Sabbath, as an instance of GOD's great Love towards them ; since GOD hereby graciously both gives them opportunities, and also lays them under an obligation to take off for that time at least their minds and hearts from these low earthly things, and the mean cares of this life. This is necessary

cessary to be done frequently, in order to raise up Mens souls to the serious contemplation of G O D's Wisdom, Power, and Goodness; and to put them upon the exercise of all those correspondent duties of gratitude and obedience, of Faith and hope in the Mediation of CHRIST, and of Love to G O D above all things, and love to all that bear his Image, for his Sake, whereby they are to be fitted and prepared for their eternal rest in Heaven.

They therefore enter into G O D's house upon his day, and in obedience to his commands, with joy and gladness and with thanksgiving, from a deep inward sense of all his unspeakable Mercies vouchsafed to Mankind, and more especially in sending his Son to reconcile them to himself, and to purchase Pardon, and Grace, and eternal Life for all who obey and thus love and serve him.

And the best and wisest for themselves generally choose to spend the rest of that holy Day, (and so too of all the other Festivals of the Church) in retirement to their Closets, for more enlarged private devotions than on common days; and in devout meditations on the Love of G O D and of CHRIST, and of all the mysteries of his condescending Goodness; and then in considering what was the gracious design and end of all this, and what returns they do, and what returns they ought to make to this mighty unconceivable Love and Kindness of our gracious G O D, and of our blessed

fed Redeemer, to his apostate unworthy Creatures.

Upon these Principles and from these considerations and their suitable practice, the Children of G O D, of Light, of Wisdom, as the holy Scripture styles all sincere Christians, make the *Lord's day*, a day for *themselves* too in their best capacities and nearest concerns; that is, a day for their own *immortal Spirits*. And thus they look upon the day not only as the most *joyful*, but as the most *gainful* day in the whole Week; since they are therein chiefly, if not wholly employ'd in doing their *proper work*, that which was the *end* of their *Creation*, viz. in bringing Honour and Glory to their good G O D, and providing for their own eternal happiness.

And for this great and good reason all confederate wise *Children of the Kingdom*, think themselves as much more obliged to a careful management of this, than of any of the other days of the Week, as the most solemn and stated attendance upon, and converse with G O D by his own appointment in his Ordinances, and the care of their never-dying Souls, are to be preferr'd before the provision they are making on other days for their short-lived perishing Bodies.

In order therefore to *make their calling and election sure*, which is the first and great business and design of our lives, they carefully examine and impartially search on those days into the state of their own Souls; they make up their accounts, as I

may

may say, between GOD and themselves, and see how far, and in what preparation they are for the coming of the Lord on a sudden, upon the shortest warning, suppose it were that Night, and for that Rest into which they hope to enter, when they put off this their earthly Tabernacle.

Farther yet, they who make conscience of improving the Lord's-day, so as they ought, will also take care to employ so much of these Holy-days as is necessary or convenient in the instruction of their Children and Servants in the Principles and all the Duties of the Christian Religion; in making out to them the certainty of those first Principles, on which all Religion is founded, and whatever else the holy Scripture teaches and requires of us, in order to our Salvation. They will try to make them understand all the necessary Doctrines of the Gospel, and the whole compass of their Duty, in relation to GOD, to their Neighbours, and to themselves, and the necessity of performing those Duties in order to their Salvation.

And in particular they will oblige them all that they can, to make conscience of employing the Lord's-day so as they ought, and as is above directed, after their own good example. For we may observe, that GOD not only commands the Jews to remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy themselves, but likewise to take care that it be not profaned, and put to common use by their Children or their Servants, for whom

whom they are in some measure responsible also.

We ought yet farther to express the great Honour we have for GOD, by having a due regard, and paying that reverence which it becomes us, to every other thing which is dedicated, devoted, or any way more peculiarly related to him; such are his holy Word, his Sacraments, his Name, his Ministers, his House, his Revenues or Possessions,

We must duly reverence GOD's Word, the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as the gracious manifestations of himself, the declarations of his Will to us; which we must therefore esteem and value above all other Books: We must read and study them with all possible care and attention: We must believe whatever is there declared and affirmed, what is there promised or threatned; and we must make the Precepts we there find the constant Rule and Guide of all our designs, thoughts, words, and actions.

We must honour GOD too in the value and esteem we have for, and the reverent use we make of those Sacraments, which he hath expressly appointed as means of Grace and Salvation to us.

We must with great Thankfulness own the early favour and advantage we received in our being enter'd into Covenant with GOD by our Baptism, and so dedicated to him before we were capable of making such choice our selves; as the Jewish Infants were by Circumcision on the

eighth

eighth Day taken into Covenant with GOD, by his exp^{re}ss Command to them.

For as we are hereby devoted, and so bound to the Service of GOD, and to an uniform obedience to all his Laws, as soon as we are able to understand them; so we are entitled to all the privileges, and to all the Benefits of CHRIST's Mediation; viz. to the Pardon of all those Sins we do repent of and forsake; to the guidance and assistance of GOD's holy Spirit; and then to eternal Life and Happiness; in case we perform, when we come to years of discretion, what the Charity of our Sureties promised for us, and thus obliged us to, before we were capable of doing any thing our selves towards obtaining so great and invaluable Blessings.

We must honour GOD too in the frequent and reverent use of the Sacrament of the *Lord's-Supper*. For in that Sacrament all who receive it worthily do not only thankfully remember the Death of CHRIST, and all the great Benefits we do receive thereby; but they do also take upon themselves, as their own act and choice, and do then and there most solemnly confirm and renew the Vow made in their Names at their Baptism.

And they do farther hereby both oblige themselves to the more diligent study and practice of all Holiness of heart and life; and also by a lively Faith, and an humble reliance on the Merits of CHRIST's Death and Passion, they do actually receive and are made Partakers of all those Benefits

fits he hath purchased for them, and hereby declares and gives them a right to. And finally they do thereby solemnly profess themselves Members of CHRIST's holy Catholick Church, testifying to the World, and exciting in themselves that sincere Love which every Disciple of JESUS CHRIST owes to all the other genuine Members of his Body.

Jer. IV.2. We do then also honour GOD's Name, when we do devoutly and solemnly take him to witness the Truth of what we assert or promise, being required so to do by publick Authority, or in order to some good end, whereby the Glory of GOD or the good of Mankind is promoted, *viz.* by our thus *swearing in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness*, for the preservation of Peace, or for the better administration of justice in a Nation, and composing in a legal way such differences as may happen between any of our Christian Brethren.

Exod. XX. And since GOD hath declared in a distinct Precept of the old Law, that *he will not hold him guiltless*, that is, he will severely punish that man *who takes the Name of the Lord his GOD in vain*; we must take great care not only to abstain from all *false Oaths*, in which we either swear what we do not certainly know to be true, or promise what we do not perform; but likewise from all unnecessary, all *rash and vain Oaths*.

And we must not only avoid all such swearing by the sacred Name of GOD, but even

even by any of his Creatures, as our blessed Mat. V. 33. Lord explains this matter. *Ec.*

Farther yet, we ought to be so far from *taking the Name of GOD in vain*, in any sense, that we ought never to use it upon any slight and frivolous occasion in our common discourse; nor indeed should we ever mention the tremendous Majesty of GOD, without an inward Reverence and a devout lifting up of our hearts at least towards him.

And even such an outward publick mark of respect would be much more reasonably shewn here at the *naming of GOD*, than it is by that Nation, who usually bare their Heads as often as they name their comparatively poor and mean earthly Monarch, whom they also always style, *The King our Lord*, in their common discourse; when perhaps they forget his *Master*.

We cannot but here again reflect with some horroure upon the prodigious folly and shameless impiety of *common habitual Swearers*; who lose their credit with all wise and good men, and give their Souls to the Devil, for no greater temptation or gain, than the desperate vanity and folly of daring openly to defy and blaspheme that GOD, and that Religion, by which they hope, many of them at least, as they tell us, to be saved.

We must farther honour GOD by paying a due regard to those who are by his own appointment set apart for his more immediate Service. They have the character

2 Cor. V. 20. *After of being Ambassadors for CHRIST, who are to pray men in CHRIST's stead to be reconciled to GOD ; and again St. Paul declares,*

2 Cor. IV. 1. *That men ought to account them (viz. himself and his Fellow-labourers in the Gospel) as the Ministers of CHRIST, and stewards of the Mysteries of GOD: and therefore whatever respect, esteem or love is shewn to them upon account of such their character and their peculiar relation to GOD, whatever care is taken to make a competent provision for their decent subsistence, and whatever obedience and regard is had to those messages which they deliver in the Name of GOD, and are agreeable to his Word, redound upon their great Master, whose Ambassadors and Ministers and Stewards they are.*

Matthew
XXVIII. 20.
2 Cor. V. 19.
1 Thes. V. 13.

And since GOD who was in CHRIST reconciling the World to himself, hath committed to the Apostles, and their lawfully constituted Successors, (whom CHRIST promised to be with always to the end of the World) the word or Ministry of Reconciliation, we ought to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake.

And all that contempt and scorn which is cast upon any of CHRIST's Ministers, by some Miscreants and Infidels and Prodigies of Lewdness and impiety, barely upon account of that their relation to him, is so much contempt and scorn cast upon CHRIST and upon GOD himself. We have our Lord's peremptory decision of this matter. He that heareth you, heareth me ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me ;

and

and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me. And indeed all such disrespect shewn to those who are dedicated to the Service of CHRIST in his Church, upon account of such their relation to him, evidently is founded on and leads to the contempt of Religion it self, and so too of its great Object and Author, our blessed Lord and Saviour.

We ought moreover to honour GOD, by expressing a due regard to the Places set apart for divine Worship; employing and using them, and demeaning our selves in them with that decent respect and reverence, which is due to whatsoever has any relation to GOD and to his Service.

And finally we are to honour GOD by devoting to him a reasonable portion of the estate he hath bless'd us with, for the uses of Piety and Charity; and by carefully employing whatsoever has been regularly devoted to him, by our selves or any others, to those uses and those only to which they are appropriated, never presuming sacrilegiously to alienate any part of it, but with a good Conscience and a willing heart giving unto GOD the things which are GOD's.

R

S U N.

SUNDAY XV.

Of the Duties we owe to our selves. Of Self-preservation, and the true Love of our selves. A practical Explication of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. Poverty of Spirit describ'd, and the Blessings it entitles us to. Of religious Mourning, and reasons assign'd for it, and the Promises made to it. Of Meekness, and the Blessing annex't to it. Of hungering and thirsting after Righteousness, and the promise made thereunto.

Tit. II. 12.

HAVING given a large Account of our Duty towards GOD, we come now to consider what Duties we owe to our selves; which are comprised by St. Paul, in those words, *living soberly*: as also what we owe to our Neighbours, is comprised in those other words, *living righteously*: Both which are natural consequents of our living godly, that is, worshipping GOD aright, and living with due regard had to GOD and to his Laws in all things which relate either to others or to our selves.

And here it may be fit to observe, that as *loving the Lord our GOD with all our heart*, that is, loving him in the best manner and to the highest degree we are able, in all and above all things, is the Foundation of, and that which alone gives a value to

to all the other Duties we owe or can pay to him; so *loving our neighbours as we love our selves* and consequently *loving our selves* too so as we ought to do, is both the foundation and the true measure and standard of all that we are obliged to perform, in regard either to our selves or to any other person.

Thus is *Love the fulfilling of the Law*, it Rom. XIII. is the compleating and perfection both of 10. the Law of our particular natures, strongly enforcing us to take care of, and to do good to our selves; and also of the revealed Laws and Will of G O D, both in the Jewish and Christian dispensations; all which oblige us to love, serve and obey G O D, the sovereign Good, both out of gratitude for our Being, and out of a due sense of all those Blessings we have received and do hope for; and then to treat all Mankind, the Offspring of our common Father, with all that justice and equity, all that charity and humanity, all that brotherly-kindness, forbearance and compassion, and with that due inward regard to and desire of their welfare, which we find we have for our own selves in all cases.

The first and must general Duty then that we owe to our selves, we see, is *Self-love*, or *Self-preservation* rightly understood and stated from the principles of Reason and Religion, and duly pursued in all its just consequences.

Now the true *Love of our selves* is nothing else but such a good affection to, and hearty kindness for our selves, and

chiefly for what is *principal* and *distinguishing* in us, as puts us upon a constant restless endeavour to procure to our selves and promote all we can the greatest good and happiness we are capable of, and that too for the longest duration, or in that endless state for which we are made.

And since our *immortal Spirits*, which being made after the Image of GOD, enliven and ennoble these our earthly Tabernacles, which are mouldring into dust and rottenness, are our *most true selves*, our *selves still and for ever*, even when our *Bodies* sleep in the grave, 'tis evident that all true *Self-love* and *Self-preservation* must be chiefly employ'd about that part of our composition, which is most properly *our selves*, and so of infinitely more concern to us, and more truly valuable than our frail perishing Body is or can be.

Hence it follows, that the care of our *never-dying Souls*, and their eternal happiness, is the first and the great duty we owe to *our selves*; and that this ought to have a preference to the provision we make for our Tenements of Clay, as considerable in proportion as Heaven is higher than Earth, as *our Souls* are preferable to *our Bodies*, and as Eternity will out-last our *Seventy or Eighty* years.

Now nothing but the Christian Religion, well understood, and duly practised, can make us happy in any degree in this life, or in the next; and this most certainly can, and will do it in both, if the fault be not our own.

For

For such our application to G O D, and care to please him, such an humble dependance upon him and trust in him, as Christianity teaches and requires, by sanctifying our natures, raising our affections, and entitling us to GOD's more especial care and protection, will best support us under all those miseries and calamities which we are subject to in this mortal life. It gives us also that settled calm and peace of mind, and solid joy and contentment in all conditions, which no other thing in the whole World can do. It frees us, by the Grace of the Gospel, from the dominion of Sin, and from the base drudgery of all vile affections, and of all fleshly and worldly lusts or desires, and consequently it frees us from the fear of Death and of Hell, and fills us with a joyful hope of unspeakable happiness after this life, as hath been already shewn more at large.

And since we can never be truly happy but in our return and obedience to, and in our dependance upon that GOD who made us, and in that Salvation which our blessed Lord hath purchased for us, the first duty we owe to our selves, is to engage as early as we possibly can, and with the very first use and early dawning of our reason, in the service of G O D, and in the study and knowledge both of those Principles, which we have already given an account of, and also of all the duties of the Christian Religion.

Now those both general and more particular duties which we Christians owe to our selves and to our neighbours, and indeed to GOD too, are either recommended by our Lord, by his declaring all those to be blessed who practise them, or are expressly commanded by him in his improvement of the Jewish Moral Law, or are otherwise given as Precepts more peculiar to the Christian Institution, in that abstract of his Religion contain'd in his admirable Sermon on the Mount. I shall therefore chuse to give an account of them according to that model, and in that method in which he was pleas'd there to lay them down for our Instruction, and shall also consider those irresistible Arguments and Encouragements for our obedience thereto, which he was pleased there to propound.

Mat. V. 3.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, saith our great Master: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Now this expression, *poor in spirit*, or in mind, in will and affections, seems in the Jewish Language first and most properly to denote and signify, *humble, lowly-minded men, men wholly devoid of all pride, arrogance, and self-conceit.* Thus those other expressions, *poor and of a contrite Spirit, to whom GOD will look;* and again, *a man of a contrite and humble Spirit, with whom GOD is said to dwell,* do both seem to import that great fundamental Grace of humility, or of being lowly in heart, which CHRIST commands his Disciples to learn of him.

Isa. LXVI. 2.

Isa. LVII.

15.

Mat. XI. 29.

And

And because truly humble-minded Men, as they have no great opinion of themselves, so they do not desire that others should think better of them than they themselves do, nor do they care to make any figure and appearance in this vain World, it follows that for the same reason they are also poor in Spirit, *not averse in their minds to poverty*, but are well content with a very small share of the good things of this Life, and do generally think they have more reason to *fear* than to *desire* great riches and worldly prosperity, which are chiefly both sought after and made use of to gratify mens pride, ambition, and high thoughts of themselves.

Now to those who are thus *poor in Spirit*, who are of humble, modest, and teachable dispositions, who are easy and contented with their present moderate condition, and whose Spirits, that is, their minds, wills and desires, their hearts are not set upon riches, and secular pomp and greatness, so much as they are upon the service of GOD, and upon *seeking his Kingdom and his Righteousness* our Lord here promises *the Kingdom of Heaven*, which they thus wisely prefer to all other things; that is, they who are thus qualified, are fitted in a peculiar manner for entering into CHRIST's spiritual Kingdom, his Kingdom of Grace, or for embracing the Gospel; and they also shall in due time be Heirs of that Kingdom of Glory, which he hath purchased for them, who despise or

neglect what the Children of this World most value and admire.

So that now this poverty of Spirit, or true Christian humility, is that grace or virtue which teaches and obliges us to have low and mean, that is, just thoughts of our selves, never to pretend to any virtue or any good thing which we have not, nor to pride our selves in what we have; but to give all the glory to GOD, from whom we receive it, and to humble our selves under a sense of our own manifold failings, weakness, and imperfections in our best performances, and of our utter inability to do or to think any thing that is good, as of our selves.

This poverty of Spirit also obliges us not to seek, nor to be much pleased with the praise and applause of men; not to despise other men, and to bear contempt easily from them; not to affect publick fame, a great and groundless reputation, or greedily to seek after great and high places. To avoid expensive vain ostentation, all pomp, pride and luxury in our dress or furniture or table, above our place and condition; not to live up to the height of what they generally do, who being in the same outward circumstances of fortune with us, place their chief happiness in these things, and seem to have their portion in this life only, having little or no regard to that which will never end.

And as this poverty of spirit imports also a great indifferency to or neglect of wealth, and all the pride of life; so it ob-

liges

liges us to keep our minds and hearts free from, and far above all eager, covetous desires and longing after Riches. It obliges us to be well contented without them, if we have them not; and neither to trust in, nor to value our wealth, if we have it, as if that could make us happy; nor yet to value our selves the more barely upon having it; nor others the less, for their not having it; but to use and manage those riches which GOD gives us with great care, prudence, and charity, as a trust committed to us by our Lord, and for which we stand accountable to him, as those who are his receivers and stewards.

This poverty of Spirit therefore inclines us to be more ready and glad to part with our money upon all good occasions, than either sordidly and unjustly to hoard up the portion of our needy brethren, or to squander it away in any sinful or unjustifiable course of living; to be always poor, in a constant preparation of our minds; and to be actually so, to be ready to sell all, and to lose all we have, out of obedience to CHRIST, and if he so require.

In short then we see, that to be *poor in Spirit*, or in mind, and in affection towards all secular pomp and greatness, imports to be humble and lowly in all conditions, in our thoughts of our selves, and in all our behaviour towards others, and also not much to value nor to set our hearts upon wealth.

And if we have riches, to be always mindful not to be undone by them; but to

to use them chiefly to the glory of GOD, to the good of others, and in order to the furtherance of our own happiness, as good and faithful stewards of those talents we are entrusted with by our Lord, and for which we must give a particular account to him at the last day.

Now this *Poverty of Spirit* being placed by our Lord in the front of those qualifications, to each of which he promised blessedness, ought to be lookt upon by us as a leading and fundamental virtue or grace, and such an one as is most proper and best fitted to make way for all the rest.

Gen. III. 5.

For as *Pride* was the first beginning or inlet of sin and misery into the World; for Lucifer would be like the most High, and our first Parents would be as Gods, knowing good and evil; so true humility, which is the owning our Creature-state, our dependance upon GOD, and the demeaning our selves accordingly, is the foundation of all virtue and happiness. And as the love of the World is enmity to GOD, and sets us at the greatest distance from him; so the contempt of the World, and of all its allurements, brings us nearer to GOD, and so to our true felicity.

Our Lord therefore promises the Kingdom of Heaven, the highest exaltation and advancement our nature is capable of, to those who are poor in Spirit, who are humble and lowly in heart, that is, whose wills are entirely resigned to the will of GOD, and who take care to obey him in all things.

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He promises heavenly riches, the knowledge of the truth, the remission of Sins, the assistance of the holy Spirit, in which the Kingdom of Heaven, or the Kingdom of Grace in this life consists, to them who are by the grace of the Gospel got above all those Kingdoms of the World, and the glory of them, which are so invincible a temptation to all but these *poor in spirit*, that the Devil tried to tempt the Son of GOD himself with the offer of them to fall down and worship him.

To those who are thus *poor in Spirit*, our Lord also promises that eternal life or inheritance in that Kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of glory, which alone can make them truly blessed, and blessed for ever.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. This mourning here recommended, is by our Lord opposed to *being full*, and to *laughing*, that is, to that carnal mirth, and to that ill-grounded false joy and immoderate pursuit of pleasure, to that ease and luxury which sensual men give themselves up to. 'Tis opposite to making fond diversions and sports, and the impertinencies and follies of unthinking men, the business of their lives, by which ill management so great a part of mankind drown their consciences, and stifle all thoughts of the great end of their being, and so are grossly negligent both of their present duty, and of their future state either of happiness or of misery, one of which must be their portion for ever.

Now

Now this Christian duty of mourning obliges us in general, as it is usual in mourners, to keep our selves always in such a serious reflecting temper and frame of spirit, as is contrary to that foolish mirth and careless thoughtless jollity of voluptuous, idle, and useless men, or to that *laughter of fools*, which makes them altogether unfit for, and wholly indisposed to all sober and wise consideration of those things which most nearly concern them.

2 Cor. VII.
10.

This christian Gospel-mourning farther yet imports that *godly sorrow* which St. Paul tells us, *worketh repentance to salvation never to be repented of*. And as this sorrow for our sins is absolutely necessary to compleat, or rather to begin our more solemn repentance, when that hath been needful by reason of any sinful habit, or wilful transgression of GOD's Laws; so there's room and foundation enough for it in the whole course of the lives of most Christians.

A due reflexion upon those many and great sins and failings which we our selves have, by GOD's grace, repented of and forsaken, and upon our own present imperfections and infirmities, and our coming so very short of our duty of loving GOD to that degree we ought, and of doing all the good which we might have done: And again, a due reflexion upon the sins of others, especially such crying *national sins* whereby our blessed Lord is highly dishonoured; and then upon those miseries and calamities both temporal and eternal which such multitudes of professed Christians

Christians bring upon themselves by reason of their provocations of GOD; all these considerations, I say, do both justifie, and indeed make this mourning an eminent grace and virtue in the best men.

Now as these mourners, having their minds taken off from all those poor, sickly, worldly joys, and those sensual pleasures others dote upon, are thereby prepared and fitted for more solid comforts and delights than any of these transitory things can afford them; so they have here an express promise, that they shall have their hearts desire. *They shall be comforted*; they shall be comforted in this life with a joyful sense of their reconciliation with GOD, and of the remission of their sins, thro' the mediation of his Son, and the sanctification of his Spirit; and with an assured hope that they shall be for ever happy in heaven; and they shall at last enter into the joy of their Lord, where true and endless comforts are to be found.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the Earth. The meek, that is, men of calm, quiet and contented minds; men of bearing and forgiving tempers; who wisely keep their minds free from and ever above all bitter disquieting and stormy passions and evil dispositions, such as are anger, rage, malice, discontent, ambition, pride, envy, or desire of revenge, &c. They are such whose Souls dwell at ease, in peace and tranquillity, and in universal love and good will to all mankind; who are kind and obliging to all, who neither in-

Matt. V. 5.

injure nor provoke any man, nor are themselves easily provoked to understand or to resent, much less ever to revenge affronts or wrongs done to them; but they are always most ready to forgive, and greatly pleased in their passing by the failings, and imperfections, and ignorances, and inadvertencies of others, and in overcoming and requiting any evil they receive, with doing all the good they can, out of obedience to their Lord, to those persons who most spitefully and causelessly injure them.

For they shall inherit the Earth; that is, men of this mild and gentle, bearing and forgiving temper, do usually both much better, and much longer enjoy the good things of this present life, than men of turbulent, discontented, of peevish and quarrelsome, of haughty and vindictive Spirits. But however this be, these men of invincible goodness will certainly inherit those *new Heavens and that new Earth* mentioned by St. Peter, *wherein dwelleth Righteousness*; of which heavenly country, the land of *Canaan* was only a type, as the Children of *Israel's* settling there after their long pilgrimage and wandering in the Wilderness, was a type of that everlasting rest which remains to the Children of GOD.

2 Pet. III.

Mar. V. 6.

Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after Righteousness: for they shall be filled. To hunger and thirst after Righteousness evidently imports and obliges us to have as eager and pressing desires after, and to use as earnest and restless endeavours to ob-

obtain all those christian graces, good dispositions and habits of virtue whereby we serve, please, obey, and resemble GOD, as an hungry or a thirsty man hath, or useth, to slake those most natural and importunate appetites he is so sensibly affected with.

And if our natures are thus spiritualized, and our Souls long for, and thirst after that universal holiness and purity of heart and life, and we do earnestly endeavour to be such as *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth* were said to have been, viz. to be righteous before GOD, walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless; if we set our hearts chiefly upon performing all those duties the Gospel requires of us, and obtaining those mercies it promises to us; we shall then be filled with this righteousness, we shall here be blessed with the aids and assistance of GOD's holy Spirit, to enable us to do his will, and also with a joyful sense of his love and favour to us; and in the next life we shall be made compleatly happy by that fulness of joy which is in the presence of GOD, and with those pleasures that are at his right hand for evermore.

Luke I. 6.

Psal. XVI.
11.

SUN-

SUNDAY XVI.

Of Mercifulness, and the Promise made to merciful men. Of purity in heart, wherein it consists. In what sense they who are pure in heart shall see GOD. Peace-makers described. How and upon what accounts, they are called, and are the Children of GOD.

Matt. V. 7.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Now these merciful men are those who, out of obedience to GOD, and universal love to mankind, and out of a tender compassion to all who do ill, or who suffer ill, charge themselves with doing all they can towards the redressing the calamities, and relieving the wants of their christian brethren. They are those who, by pitying their infirmities, and passing by the injuries they receive from others, and supporting and comforting them, to their power, in all their distresses, do make their claim to this noble and God-like temper.

They shew mercy to the Souls of men, by praying earnestly to GOD for them, that he would please to bring all men to the knowledge of, and to a willing obedience to the Gospel of his Son. This they do also by instructing or procuring the instruction of the young and ignorant in their duty; by warning the unruly and dis-

disorderly, and endeavouring, by seasonable counsel, advice, and mild reproof, and above all by a steady, exemplary, and unblameable conversation, to reduce those who err and go astray; and in short, by labouring in their due station and place, after the reformation and greatest good of all men, with that prudence and charity which ought to govern in this affair.

They likewise make it their business and their great pleasure to succour, assist, and relieve, as they have opportunity and ability, their christian brethren, in all their wants and necessities relating to the things of this present life. This they perform by feeding and clothing the hungry and naked, in a good proportion to those talents of wealth GOD entrusts them with to this end, by visiting and taking care of the sick and imprisoned, by righting the injured, where they can, whether in their possessions, or their good name, and in a word, in losing no opportunity of doing all the good offices they are able to those who stand in need of them, and whom the providence of GOD puts as it were into their way, and points out to them as proper objects of their care.

Now these *merciful* men, whose general trade or calling and business it is to do all the good they can to all men, and to advance and promote the spiritual and temporal happiness of others, in all instances, and upon all occasions that offer, shall obtain all that *mercy* which they themselves can at any time stand in need of,

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or desire. They do commonly meet with the same kind usage and assistance and compassion from others, if ever they come to be in any distress; since *for a good man, St. Paul tells us, some will even dare to die.*

Rom. V. 7.

But on this we may depend, that Almighty GOD will be sure to requite all that their kindness and charity to their brethren, with such mercies as are infinitely more valuable than any they could shew to others; because his mercies are of infinite duration, as well as of infinite concern to all men. He will both forgive them all their sins, those *hundred talents* they owe to him, in lieu of those *few pence* they forgive to their fellow-servants; and he will also give them eternal life, or a portion in his heavenly kingdom, for which they have been thus wisely fitting themselves by this nearest approach to and resemblance of the divine goodness, viz. by thus *being*

Luke VI. 36. *merciful, as our Lord commands his Disciples, as GOD their Father is merciful.*

Matt. V. 8.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see GOD. Heart, in that language in which our Saviour spake, signifies all the faculties and powers, or properties and capacities of the Soul. It comprehends and imports the mind and understanding, the will and affections, the inclinations and passions, the practical judgment and resolution, and in a word, all the first and inmost springs and principles both of our knowledge, choice, and action.

And consequently hereto, a *pure or clean heart* is such an holy frame and temper of mind,

mind, or a mind so constantly disposed to piety and to all virtue, that it never suffers us to give way to, or to indulge ourselves in any sinful lust or passion, or in any known transgression of GOD's Law, whereby our Souls are defiled and polluted in his sight.

And so these pure in heart are such only who take great care to cleanse themselves from all filthiness both of the flesh and of the Spirit, as St. Paul exhorts, and to perfect holiness in the fear of GOD. They study to keep their Hearts and Souls free from all wicked thoughts, purposes and designs; as also from all hypocrisy and double mindedness, or dividing themselves betwixt GOD and Mammon, betwixt GOD and the World, or any favourite, ruling lust or sin.

These pure in heart constantly endeavour to keep their minds free from all pride and vain-glory, from all hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, &c. which are the filthiness or defilement more properly of the Spirit; since the mind seems to have the greatest share in these kinds of sin, as the body has more particularly in those more gross and flagrant crimes the Apostle joins with them, viz. adultery, fornication, uncleanness, drunkenness, and revellings, &c.

All which forementioned evil dispositions, and less noted seeds of vice, St. Paul reckons up together among the manifest works of the flesh, because they proceed from a corrupt, carnal principle; in which sense

Gal. V. 19, *flesh is there opposed to the Spirit of GOD,*
20. *as well as to the reason of the mind.* And

Mat. XV. 19, *our blessed Lord declares, that these evil*
20. *thoughts, blasphemy, or evil speaking,*
that is, speaking evil of others without
a just reason, &c. as well as murders adul-
teries, &c. proceed out of the heart, and defile
the man.

Now those who are thus pure in heart,
who thus keep their minds, wills and af-
fections free from all defilement of any in-
ordinate fleshly or worldly desires, such
as are the *lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes,*
and the pride of life, or the undue love and
pursuit of and delight in sensual pleasures,
riches and honours, or the esteem of vain
men, are hereby fitted and qualified for the
sight of GOD in some measure in this pre-
sent life, and more fully and clearly in the
life to come.

They shall see GOD here, that is, they will
frequently employ their understanding, which
is the eye of their rational Soul or mind, in
contemplating and adoring his greatness,
wisdom, power and goodness; they will
see GOD always before them, and live under
a constant habitual sense of his all-seeing
eye, and of his presence with them, and
of his favour and love to them. They in-
wardly perceive or see, and joyfully look
upon GOD, as their GOD, their Father,
their Friend, and constant Benefactor, and
as he promised to Abraham, *their shield and*
exceeding great reward.

most becoming they proceed from
which sense principle; in which sense

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GOD also dwells in such pure hearts and minds, as in his temple, by his holy Spirit, by which they are taught, led and governed; and thus he doth manifest himself to them in a more especial manner than to others. Our Lord promises, that his Father and himself will love *that man who loves him, and keeps or observes his words; and that they will come unto him, and make their abode with him,* i. e. GOD will dwell with or in him by the communication of all spiritual blessings. Joh. XIV. 23.

And as they who have thus purified their hearts by faith, and by the grace of GOD, from all evil affections and lusts, from all sensuality, pride, and hypocrisie, and from all inordinate love of the world, will be blessed with clearer manifestations of GOD, and communications of his goodness to them in this life than others have; so will they be most happy in that life which is to come, by living for ever with him in the light of his countenance, or in the fullest participation of the divine favour and goodness to all eternity, when *they shall be like him, and see him as he is.* 1 Joh. III. 2.

Blessed are the Peace-makers: for they shall be called the Children of GOD. Those Mar. V. 9. Peace-makers to whom that high privilege is promised, are the men of a sweet, quiet and gentle disposition. They are such as being at peace with GOD by the reconciliation of their natures to his will and laws, and of their persons to his favour by the mediation of his Son our Redeemer, and consequently hereto, having peace with

themselves also, and their own consciences, do keep themselves at the greatest possible distance from all contention, strife and division; they are such as have subdued, by the grace of GOD, and by the right use of their Religion and their reason, all those bitter and uneasy dispositions or habits of Pride, and false Self-love, of rash anger, of malice or desire of revenge, and of covetousness, which are the fertile roots of all that discord, those wars and fightings which disquiet and overturn the World, and so are not to be shaken or beaten off from that serene tranquillity and steady firmness of mind, which makes so great a part of the felicity of every wise and good man in this World.

That universal Love or Brotherly affection towards all men, with which their Souls are stored, never suffers them to give a just provocation, by wronging or affronting, by despising or speaking evil of any of those for whom they have so true kindness and sincere good will. And it makes them always ready and prepared easily to bear, and to overlook with a generous pity, the follies, weakness and indiscretions of all untaught, unbred men, all poor impotent slaves to their lusts and passions.

And that resentment which others feel on these occasions, is perfectly and agreeably stifled and silenced in the Peace-maker's breast, by a modest but pleasing reflexion on the advantage he hath over the in-

injuriously and passionate, in being so much the wiser and better man of the two.

And as this obliging forbearing and endearing deportment, free from a positive or magisterial air, the fair and equitable, not arbitrary or assuming temper of these men in the matter of right and wrong, and their chusing rather to refer their case to other men, than to be their own Judges, generally cuts off all occasion of falling out with others; so are these *Peace-makers* too, in the more usual and common sense of that word, hearty and industrious promoters of peace and of unity both in the Church, in the State, and among all persons where they have the least hope, or indeed possibility of compassing so worthy and desirable an end.

These *blessed Peace-makers* therefore as they use all the arts, and take all the precaution they can, to prevent unchristian broils and quarrels and falling out among Brethren, and to preserve that Peace our Lord so strictly enjoins all the Members of his Body to have with one another; so do they stick at no pains or trouble, but use their utmost endeavours to compose all differences, and to restore and revive that mutual love and good will and brotherly kindness, which is so great a Duty, as well as the proper badge and character of our excellent Religion.

See how the Christians love one another, in what unity and concord they do all live, was an honourable mark of that

Profession, among the Pagans in the first and best Ages of Christianity, tho' tis now so much worn out and lost, together with that holy Religion it self, which is a Name and Title only in too great a part even of the Christian World so call'd.

Now these *Peace-makers* are *blest* in the great honour and advantages they receive of being *called*, that is, according to the *Hebrew* idiom, or manner of speaking, *being the Children of* the most high GOD.

They are GOD's *Children* by regeneration, as they receive from him that new and heavenly or spiritual Nature, such dispositions and principles of a divine life, as incline and enable them to practise those higher, nobler and harder duties, to which the corruption of our nature, and the prevalency of passion and of worldly interest, and the contrary evil customs, and false however receiv'd maxims of the World do generally render all men so very averse.

Again they are GOD's *Children*, as they resemble him in the bent and the frame of their mind, who *the* is *G O D of Peace* as well as of *all Mercy*, who invites all men to peace and friendship with himself, and who sent his only Begotten Son into the World upon a message of Peace and Reconciliation.

They are *the Children of* *G O D* also, as they are in a peculiar manner dear to him, and so are taken care of and provided for by him. They have the portion of his

his Children, viz. his grace and favour, and support and protection here in this Life, and they are most fully assured of the inheritance of his Children in his eternal Kingdom and Glory hereafter.

Of Perfection for the Christian, the Blessing it entails upon it, and the Blessing it entails upon it, from the greatness of the Reward promised by CHRIST. All Christians, more especially Teachers, ought to be of the State of the Earth, the Light of the World, to be a light to others, from which they may be enlightened, at least by the good Example of holy and unblemished lives, all whom they converse with, or can influence there.

Mat. V. 10. **B**LESSED are they who are persecuted for Righteousness sake: for their reward is here to understand that universal obedience to all G. O. D's Laws which is most justly due to him, and which he hath a right to demand from all his Subjects and Servants; sincere piety, love, fear, honour and obedience is that Justice or Righteousness which we owe to G. O. D. and which he will accept from us as our reward, and reward for his having made us men, that is, rational intelligent Agents, and so capable of the high privilege of knowing and serving him.

SUNDAY XVII.

Of Persecution for Righteousness sake, what it is, and the Blessing it entitles us to. Encouragements to patience under it, from the greatness of the Reward promised by CHRIST. All Christians, more especially Teachers, ought to be the Salt of the Earth, the Light of the World, to season and to preserve from taint and corruption, to instruct and to enlighten, at least by the good Examples of holy and unblameable lives, all whom they converse with, or can influence thereby.

Mar. V. 10,
11, 12.

BLESSED are they who are persecuted for Righteousness sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. By Righteousness we are here to understand that universal obedience to all GOD's Laws which is most justly due to him, and which he hath a right to demand from all his Subjects and Servants; sincere piety, love, fear, honour and obedience, is that Justice or Righteousness which we owe to GOD, and which he will accept from us as our natural homage and tribute for his having made us men, that is, rational intelligent Agents, and so capable of the high privilege of knowing and serving him.

But

But *Righteousness* seems here to mean, or at least to imply also in particular that great indispensable Duty of confessing CHRIST before men, that is, never to be ashamed or afraid to own the Truth of the Gospel, and to profess our selves openly to be his Disciples, by living up to that rule and example which he hath given us, whatever we may come to lose or to suffer from wicked men, for such our avowed adherence to CHRIST and his righteous Laws. This our Lord expressly hath regard to, when he saith, *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you for my sake.* Mar. V. 11:

So that to be persecuted for *Righteousness sake*, or for CHRIST's sake, is in short, rather to chuse to undergo the greatest hardship or evil, than deliberately to commit the least known or but suspected wilful Sin.

This duty then obliges us never to deny, or not to flinch from the open Profession of the Christian Religion, or of any clear express article of our Faith, nor to be beaten off from the practice of any known and then necessary instance of our duty, nor yet to be prevail'd upon to do any thing contrary to the Laws and Honour of our Religion, by any scoffs or reproaches or scorn of others; nor even by the most cruel usage, imprisonment, banishment, the loss of all we have in this World, or the most painful Death that we can suffer from the utmost malice of Men or Devils.

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In a word, to be persecuted for the sake of Righteousness, or of CHRIST, is to suffer as above, for the defence of that Faith, or for a steady adherence to GOD and to CHRIST in a careful performance of all those duties; which the Gospel both teaches and enjoins us.

Mar. V. 12.

And our Lord commands us in all these cases to suffer not only with patience, but with joy and exultation of Spirit. *Rejoice ye and be exceeding glad, saith he: for great is your reward in Heaven.*

Now this spiritual Joy supposes and obliges us to suffer most willingly, and out of our own free choice, all things considered. We are not indeed rashly and causelessly to provoke, or to pull any evil or persecution upon our selves; but we ought rather to avoid it by all prudent and lawful ways, and not to lead our selves presumptuously into that Temptation which we pray to GOD to deliver us from. We may, and we ought therefore in these cases to use the wisdom of the Serpent; provided and so far as we take care to preserve the innocence of the Dove too.

But still we must chuse any other evil rather than that of Sin, which is the only true unmixt and greatest of all Evils. We must therefore resolutely and constantly confess the Faith of CHRIST, whenever we are called thereto; and we must as undauntedly avow and practise all other Christian virtues and duties, upon all just and reasonable occasions, whatever hazards,

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inconvenience or mischiefs we may expose our selves to thereby.

We must neither be ashamed of the Gospel, nor of any one Law of CHRIST; but we must boldly and effectually justify that true Wisdom whose Children we are, against all the most fashionable and prevailing errors, false maxims and sinful customs of the World; let their patrons and examples be ever so great and ever so many, and so vulgarly reputed wise men.

And we must likewise suffer patiently, that is, with an entire resignation to, and acquiescence in the will of that GOD, by whose permission, or wise and fatherly care and dispensation, we come thus to suffer persecution.

Nor must we be in any degree incensed against our Persecutors; nor so much as wish for their design, much less may we take any kind of revenge on them. We must neither render evil for evil, nor railing for railing; but on the contrary, after that noble example of our great Lord and Master, we must love and bless and do good to and pray for all those who are our enemies, who hate and curse and spitefully use us and persecute us.

And there is reason enough and encouragement in the Christian Religion to support and maintain all these paradoxes, all these strange judgments and practices, which are so contrary to the wisdom of the Men of this World. For to all those who suffer willingly, patiently and joyfully for Righteousness or for CHRIST's sake, our Lord

Lord not only promises the Kingdom of Heaven, viz. eternal Life and Glory, or that state of perfect Happiness in which the Saints shall there live and reign for ever; but he farther assures them, that great is their reward in Heaven; which plainly seems to intimate, that these their sufferings for him shall increase the weight and lustre of their crown of Glory, over and above that of other Saints. Thus St.

2 Cor IV. 17. Paul assures us, That our light Affliction, which is but for a moment, speaking of suffering for CHRIST's sake, worketh for us a far more exceeding, or the highest possible degree, as that phrase imports, and an eternal weight of Glory.

And here it may be proper to observe, as a farther argument to engage us to the highest proof of our Love to our Lord, and sincerity in our Religion, that a steady resolution and an actual forwardness to suffer for CHRIST's sake is that Self-denial, and that taking up the Cross and following CHRIST, which he peremptorily requires of all his true Disciples. If any Man will come after me, saith our Lord, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me.

Mat. XVI.

24.

Now this Command most evidently and strongly obliges us not only to renounce all sinful lusts and passions, and all evil deeds whatever, or our corrupt felices, but also to renounce our most lawful desires or inclinations, and all permitted innocent enjoyments, our dearest Friends, and even our own Lives, whenever any of these things

things hinder us from professing the Faith, or performing any of the duties enjoined by our Lord, or any ways retard and obstruct our race towards a blessed immortality.

We must then resolutely despise all the false maxims and received ill customs of the World, authorizing revenge, intemperance, sensuality, pride, luxury, irreligion, fraud, oppression, and inordinate love of Riches, by the example of those numbers of great and falsely-call'd wise and honourable Men, who throng that broad way which leads to destruction.

We must rather *turn the other Cheek*, that is, venture the receiving a second affront or injury, than inflame the quarrel by returning the first; and we must patiently and joyfully endure the scorn and laughter of all the Fools upon Earth, for forgiving a wrong out of obedience to G O D, rather than be thereby provoked to revenge it; since we do offer the highest indignity to our Creator and Redeemer by such an avow'd contempt of their Laws, and foolishly choose to dishonour the great Lord of all, rather than to be wiser and better Men, than the silliest and vilest of his Creatures. For such certainly are all those *brutish men*, who *resolve* only, tho' they should never come to *execute* such their desperate Resolution, rather to hazard the loss of their own and their Brother's soul in a Duel, than to put up an affront, or be any way wanting to that pique of false honour, which unchristens and unmans too all those who pretend

pretend to maintain their quality, and establish their reputation, by affronting and defying that G O D who made them, and who can make them miserable for ever.

Thus have we now considered at large all those great lines and fundamental rules of our duty to our selves and to our neighbours, as they are here laid down by our Lord and Master in these several beatitudes, and are pressed upon us, by the most prevailing and irresistible arguments, as they must needs prove to all who wisely weigh them for as they ought.

For as blessedness, or an endless happy state, is that which all men do most naturally and necessarily desire, so our great Law-giver hath taught us how that happiness is certainly to be obtained. This our Lord hath done here by proposing those qualifications, and the exercise of all those virtues which entitle us to the kingdom of Heaven, in the first sense of that phrase, *viz.* as it signifies the receiving that doctrine, and the practising that holiness which leads to, and constitutes that Kingdom of G O D, which our blessed Saviour came to set up in the hearts and lives of all true believers, and which will be consummate in the Kingdom of Glory, which is also here promised to those who are *poor in Spirit*.

To those who *mourn* for, and repent of, and forsake their sins, our Lord promises the comforts of a good conscience, and of G O D's holy Spirit, assuring them of the pardon of those sins they have repented

pented of and forsaken. To the meek he promises the inheritance of the Earth, that is, a quiet enjoyment generally of this World, and the possession of a better, an heavenly Country after this life. To those who hunger and thirst after Righteousness, that they shall be fully satisfied with what they do so earnestly desire, in good part here, and to their utmost wishes hereafter. To the merciful he promises, that they shall obtain all that Mercy both from men, and especially from GOD, which they stand in need of. To the pure in heart, he promises that they shall see and know GOD, as far as they are now capable in this, and more fully in the next life. To the Peacemakers, that they shall have the honour of being the Children of GOD, and shall be owned and blessed by him as such. And to those who suffer, and who rejoice in persecutions for CHRIST's sake, that they shall have such an ample Reward and greater degree of Glory in his eternal Kingdom, as no heart can now conceive, or desire.

And how is it possible then that those who are blessed now in this life, with the greatest of all those Blessings which GOD bestows only upon his dearest Children, and who live under a lively sense of GOD's favour and love to them, and of their own present happiness thereby, can be wanting in any office of Justice or Charity to their Christian Brethren? Or how can they be wanting or negligent and cold in doing their utmost endeavours to secure to them-

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selves, and to promote as far as they are able, and with all the greatest care and diligence, that blessed state, that only true happiness which is begun here, and will be compleated in the enjoyment of GOD to eternal Ages?

How is it possible that they who are truly *poor in Spirit*, humble and lowly in heart, and despisers in their Souls of all the wealth in the World, and of all the pride of life in comparison with treasures in heaven, and the ways that lead thither; that they who are dead to all sensual pleasures and earthly joys, as *Mourners* use to be during the days of their mourning; that they who are *meek*, of obedient and teachable, of contented, forbearing and forgiving tempers; that they who *hunger and thirst after Righteousness*, who have more eager and pressing desires after that universal holiness, that way to eternal life CHRIST propounds in the Gospel, than to any of these poor transitory things; that they who are *merciful*, tenderly affected, and forward to relieve all the needs of the Souls and Bodies of all others; that they who are *pure in heart*, free from all pollution of the flesh and spirit, free from all pride, from all hypocritical insincerity, and dividing their hearts between GOD and Mammon; that they who are *Peace-makers*, who are careful to maintain and procure, and to restore Peace where any breach or difference hath been, and to prevent and make up all differences between GOD and themselves, and between any of their Christian Bre-

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Bethren; and lastly, that they who can *rejoice in suffering for CHRIST's sake*; how is it possible that any who understand and practise these general Laws of CHRIST, should be remiss and careless in any particular instances of their duty which regards either GOD, or their Neighbour, or themselves?

How is it possible, I say, that such a sincerely, pious, upright, and truly wise and blessed Man as is above described, should have any thing much at heart, save that *one thing needful, viz. To walk worthy of his holy* Eph. IV. 1.
vocation, or to walk worthy of the Lord in all well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, Col. I. 10.
and increasing in the knowledge of GOD, that is, in that regard to GOD which obliges him to a constant care and watchfulness, to avoid all manner of Sin, and to the diligent practice of every Christian grace and virtue?

But since our great Master was pleased, in the following part of this Sermon, farther yet to explain, and to give some more particular instances of the several branches of these more general rules of our duty both towards GOD, towards our Neighbours, and towards our selves; the best we can do is, to inform our selves therein more fully from his Mouth, and to govern our selves also by those additional instructions, admonitions and cautions he was pleased there to deliver to his Disciples, for their and our conduct.

Now our blessed Lord, by declaring and ordaining his Disciples to *be the salt of the* Mat. V. 13,
Earth, and the light of the World, and by 14, 15.

comparing them to a City set upon an hill, and to a Candle on a candlestick, plainly teaches and obliges all Christians, in their place and station, and more especially his Apostles, and all who are to teach others, to endeavour to promote that Kingdom of GOD he came to set up, by their shining example, as well as diligent instruction, in the hearts, and in the lives of all other men, whom they may direct and influence thereby.

As they are the salt of the Earth, they must do all they can to propagate and to transfuse that spiritual Wisdom, or salt of the Soul, (as St. Chrysostom well styles the spirit and grace of the Gospel) with which their own minds are already seasoned, into the hearts and lives of others, in order to correct and amend them, to preserve or rescue them from the folly and taint of Sin, and from that corruption which is in the World thro' lust.

As they are the light of the World, and are like to a City set upon a hill, and a Candle on a candlestick, they must, the Teachers, by their sound Doctrine, and all others together with them, by the exemplary holiness of their Lives, by that eminent visible piety, sobriety, humility, and charity, and self-denial, which our Lord requires, they must, I say, be a mark and guide to others in their way towards their heavenly Country, and both enlighten those who sit in darkness, and guide their feet into the way of peace.

In fine, all CHRIST's true Disciples, as our Lord concludes this Argument, must *let or make their light so to shine before men, that they may see their good Works, and glorify their Father which is in Heaven,* Mar. V. 16. that is, that others observing their heavenly un-reprovable conversation in all godliness and honesty may be prevail'd upon, by their bright Example, to dedicate themselves also to the Service of GOD, and to glorify him by their return to their duty and allegiance, by their professed and constant obedience to the Faith of CHRIST.

We Christians then, we see, ought so to distinguish our selves from *the World that lies in Wickedness,* by the light of our good Works, and by a steady uniform obedience to all GOD's commands, and a diligent care to please him in all things, that others may be convinced of the truth and of the excellency, and the great advantages and importance of our Religion, that it comes from, and leads to GOD, and so to our true happiness, by the admirable effects it produces in us, and our close adherence to it, as to our biggest interest, and the life of our immortal Souls.

'Tis true indeed that these emphatical strong and forcible expressions, *ye are the salt of the Earth, and ye are the light of the World,* seem to have a more peculiar relation to those Persons whom our Lord at first sent to convert both the *Gentiles* and the *Jews* all over the Earth, and *to teach and baptize all Nations;* and so too by consequence they relate more particularly to

those who should be set apart for the more solemn Service of GOD and of his Church, and for propagating the Gospel, by ecclesiastical Authority, and by that delegation derived to them successively from the Apostles, and by the Apostles from CHRIST himself.

All the Ministers of the Gospel of CHRIST are indeed for very weighty reasons, over and above those which are common to them with other Christians, under the highest obligations *to make their light to shine*, by an eminently bright and exemplary conversation. They must thus preach every day upon all just occasions, by a constant, uniform, visible practice of all those graces and of all those virtues which they press upon other men. They must be *Examples of*, or *to the Believers*, that is, even to the most sincere and sound Christians, *in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit*, in that true Gospel spirit of Meekness, Humility, and Self-denial, or being crucified to the World, *in faith and in purity*, as St. Paul exhorts Timothy.

1 T.m. IV.
12.

If therefore they maintain not their due Character by such an *holy, just, and unblameable Behaviour among those who believe*, as both GOD and Men are witnesses to, after St. Paul's example; and more especially if they disparage their Profession by an unsuitable, ungodly, or any way scandalous course of life, they are then more apparently, and above all other men, that *salt which hath lost its savour, and is good for nothing but to be cast out and troden under*

1 Thes. II. 10.

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der foot, that is, they who thus betray that Gospel of CHRIST which they pretend to preach, by unholy lives and conversations, are the most unprofitable and truly despicable part of Mankind; and except they repent and amend, they above all men must expect to have their *sad portion with hypocrites and unbelievers* for ever.

Notwithstanding all which, 'tis most certain that our blessed Lord herein speaks also to the Multitude, that is, to all who then were, or ever should be his Disciples in general; for to all such the forementioned Blessings do belong; and St. Paul tells us expressly, that all Christians must be *blameless and harmless, the Sons of GOD*, Phil. II. 15. *without rebuke, and must shine like lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation.* From whence 'tis very evident, that every true Christian is obliged, in proportion to his opportunities and abilities, *to make his light also to shine before Men*, that is, so to dispose and order the general course of his life, and all his actions, that his irreprovable and exemplary conversation in his place and station, may tend to the Glory of GOD, to the promoting his Kingdom, and to the edification or farther building up and improving others, both in their Faith, and in farther degrees of Piety and Holiness.

SUNDAY XVIII.

In what sense CHRIST came to fulfil the Law. Our obligation to obedience. How our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. Unreasonable anger; bitter, reproachful language; and all approaches to murder forbidden by the Gospel, and will be punished in the next life. The necessity of forgiving injuries. Adultery, and all uncleanness whatsoever; Perjury, and all common Swearing, and profaning the Name of GOD forbidden. The ridiculous folly of common affected Swearers.

Mat. V. 17.
18, 19.

OUR Lord assures his hearers, that he came not to destroy, but to fulfil the Law and the Prophets. He did not only fulfil what was typified and foretold concerning himself in the Law, and by the Prophets; but he did also farther explain, fill up, or compleat and perfect, and raise to an higher pitch the doctrines chiefly taught and design'd by them.

And as he taught that no precept of the moral Law should lose its force and obligation to the end of the World; so he threatens those with the loss of Heaven, who wilfully and scandalously break any one of the least Commandments, and teach others to do so, tho' but by their bare example;

ample : and on the contrary, he promises that those who do and teach them, shall be great in the Kingdom of Heaven, that is, they shall be approved and principal Christians in this state, and shall be advanced to the highest dignity and glory in the next.

From all which it plainly appears, that we Christians are engaged, by all the strongest reasons and arguments, to make it our chief care and study, and our daily endeavour, both diligently to perform all that our Lord commands us, without indulging our selves in the breach of any one of his Laws, and likewise according to our particular obligations, to teach others to observe them.

This we must all attempt at least, by the most persuasive argument of an eminently holy and unblameable example, and by all other ways which our relation, ability, and opportunity qualifie us for, and so oblige us to, that so we may shine as lights here, for the honour of our Lord, and for the advantage of others ; and may hereafter shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of Mat. XIII. 43. our Father.

Our Lord farther obliges his Disciples Ver. 20. to an higher degree of sanctity, than was usually practised by those who pretended most to it among the Jews, telling them, that except their Righteousness shall exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, they shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven ; that is, that they can neither be true Christians here, nor must expect the reward of such in Heaven hereafter.

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Now our Righteousness must exceed theirs upon many accounts. It must be *universal* and *complete*, as to its extent, it must take in all kinds, parts and instances of our duty: whereas theirs generally was *partial* and *defective*, if not in many, at least in some one or other instance which lay cross to their temper or their worldly interests, and for which they hoped to compensate some other way.

Our Righteousness must be *inward* and *spiritual*, proceeding from an holy frame and disposition of mind. Our heart and our soul must be in all we do: whereas theirs was chiefly *external*, regarding only the outward act and bare letter of the Law.

It must farther be not only a *negative righteousness*, in abstaining from doing evil; but we must be ready and forward to do *all the good* we can to all others: whereas they reckoned themselves good men, not so much for any good they did, as for not doing such things as were punishable by their Laws.

And this our *active care and diligence* to observe all the Laws of GOD, and to do all the good offices we can to our brethren, must spring from, and be carried on by a *sincere love to GOD*, and to our Neighbour for his sake, and by a *filial affection*; and not by that *slavish fear* and *Spirit of bondage*, which was the most general principle of all their legal performances.

We must be also careful to *propose a right end* to our selves in all we do, *viz. to serve* and

and to please GOD, out of a sense of our duty and obligations to him, and with design to approve our selves to him, and expecting all our reward from him alone: whereas the *Pharisees* are charged by our Saviour with *doing all their works to be seen of men*, and so they were to have all their reward from them. Mat. XXIII. 5.

The sum is then, we see, that that evangelical righteousness by which we Christians are to exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, must be universal and impartial, having respect to all and every one of GOD's commandments; it must be inward and spiritual; it must be positive and active; we must learn to do well, as well as cease to do evil, which is but one half of our Religion; it must be founded upon the love of GOD and of our Neighbour; and it must have no other aim, save only to promote the honour and glory of GOD, and the salvation of our own Souls, and the good of our brethren and of all mankind.

And suitably to these declarations of his design, and of our duty, our Lord goes on to expound the sixth commandment of the moral Law, *Thou shalt not kill*, to a more full, comprehensive and spiritual sense, Mar. V. 21, 22. than that in which the Doctors of that age understood it.

For he there teaches, that as Murder was forbidden under pain of death inevitable by the Law of *Moses*, so now under the Gospel all approaches to, all occasions and dispositions towards taking away

way the life of another man illegally, and all provocations of him to take away our life, are liable to be punished by GOD with the loss of Life eternal.

He who is *angry with his brother without a cause*, rashly, unreasonably, and uncharitably, who bears ill-will towards him, or a *vengeful, murderous mind*, and would perhaps kill him, did not the fear of punishment restrain him, that man is a *murderer* before GOD, who seeth his heart, and as such he is worthy of a punishment in the next world answerable to capital punishment here.

And *whosoever shall say to his brother, Racha*, or as that word imports, shall call him vain, empty, despicable fellow, that is, he whose *rage and malice* breaks out into slighting, vilifying words, mocking, and rendring his brother thereby *contemprible* to others, shall be punished yet more severely, than he who confined his anger to his own breast, as in the former case.

But *whosoever shall say to his brother, Thou Fool*, shall be in danger of Hell-Fire. He who shall, out of *spiteful anger*, let himself loose to the most virulent, contumelious railings, and such bitter reproaches, as the name of *Fool* implies in all nations, shall undergo yet farther degrees of torment in the next life.

Racha seems here to denote some lighter kind of *reproach* or insolent scoffing, undervaluing language: but *Fool*, spoken in *anger*, with a *vengeful mind*, degrades a man from the dignity of his *reasonable nature*, and

and declares or makes him *a beast*, incapable of judging and understanding any thing; or, in the current sense of the word *Fool* among the *Jews*, and generally in the Scriptures too, it charges the man with *wickedness* and *irreligion*, with being a *Fool in the main*, in that which is our biggest interest, and in which alone we are mightily concerned to be *wise*. Such a *Fool*, I mean, as saith in his heart there is no GOD, and who makes a mock at Sin, who despises the only true wisdom of fearing GOD, and so of being upon terms of peace and friendship with him. For Atheism and Irreligion is indeed the utmost pitch of folly, and the most stupid ignorance, by which humane nature can be most vilified, and sunk deepest into the brutish state.

Thus we see, that we Christians are most expressly forbidden to give way to immoderate, unreasonable anger, to any transports of passionate resentment, to any ill-will, and revengeful thoughts; and that both all such rage and passion, and also all that abusive, opprobrious, contumelious language, in which men usually vent their spleen and choler against those who provoke or injure them, is a degree, as well as often an occasion of Murder, now under the Gospel; and that all these uncharitable heats, affronts, and unchristian misbehaviour towards our brother, are justly liable to, and will be severely punished by GOD in the next life, in proportion to their higher degree of guilt and sin.

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The sum is, we must be ever watchful not to be transported with the *resentment* of any ill usage, so far as to *wish* or to *design* any harm to our brother, whom we are obliged to love as we do love our selves; nor may we take any *revenge* upon him, either by deriding and vilifying him, or by any more opprobrious and railing words, under pain of severe punishment to be suffered in the next life; since all those who transgress these rules want that *true charity*, and *humility*, and long suffering, and that constant care to obey our Lord, which are so much the *life* and *essence*, as well as the proper *badge* and *mark* of our holy Religion.

Mar. V. 23,
24, 25, 26.

Our Lord proceeds to instruct us in the necessary duty of reconciliation to our brother, in case of any difference that may have happened between us. He teaches us that we are obliged to make what reparation we can for all sorts of injuries done or offences given to any of our brethren. Nor must we defer this great duty, tho' upon the most specious pretence, even that of paying an act of solemn worship to GOD.

If at the altar thou rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; if thou hast wronged him in his estate, by force or fraud; or in his good name by slanderous reports, rash and uncharitable censures, reviling or defaming, ridiculing or exasperating language; or hast any other way grieved his mind, and given him any just cause of complaint; thou must in all these, and the like

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like cases, make all the *restitution*, and give all the best *satisfaction* thou art able, before thou proceed to offer thy gift, or to pay any act of worship to GOD.

Whereby our Lord doth plainly intimate, that GOD will accept no sacrifice or oblation, no Prayer, Praise or Thanksgiving from those who continue under the guilt and sin of *injustice* or *uncharitableness*; and that we ought to be reconciled to those persons whom we have any way injured, and to make all the amends we can, at least in the *preparation of our minds*, and a firm *resolution* so to do upon the first opportunity we can find, before we presume to approach to GOD for the pardon of our own sins.

We are likewise here admonished, by a familiar example relating to this matter in mens secular affairs, that the sooner we repent and make satisfaction for any offence or injury done to our brother, the more it will be for our advantage. But if we do not agree with our adversary whilst we are in the way towards Death and Judgment, as we all are at all times, if we do not in this life make *restitution* of whatever we have unjustly either by force or fraud taken from others, and *reparation* for any offence we have given them, we do expose our selves to the severity of GOD's judgment in the next life; which is here represented by being cast into Prison, and not coming out thence till we have paid the uttermost farthing.

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Mat. V. 27,
28.

Gal. V. 20.

Rom. I. 26.
Ephes. V. 13.

Rom. I.

Mat. V. 27,
28.

Mat. V. 28.

The Law against Adultery, which our Lord mentions and improves, or perfects and sets higher, forbids not only that *horrid crime*, which is most properly so called; but also whatever leads to it, and whatever besides is *unlawful and sinful* in that kind. It forbids *incest, fornication*, and all other *impurity or defilement* whatever; all that *uncleanness, lasciviousness*, and all those *works of the flesh*, most properly so called, of which St. Paul affirms, that they who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of GOD.

This Law also forbids all those *vile, dishonourable affections* as St. Paul styles them, and *unfruitful works of darkness*, which it is a shame even to speak of, and which all but the most profligate hardened sinners, and such who not liking to retain GOD in their knowledge, are given over by him to a reprobate mind, are most ashamed to own the guilt of; that is, every thing of that nature is forbidden by this Law, even in the opinion of the Jewish Doctors, which is not within the permission, and directed to those ends for which Marriage was instituted by Almighty GOD in man's state of innocence.

But our Lord farther assures us upon his own great and just authority, that Adultery may be committed in and by the heart only, that is, by indulging such *unchaste thoughts, desires, and designs*, as entering in by a lascivious eye taint the imagination and defile the Soul; and that he who thus consents to, and chuses to entertain such

first

first motions and unlawful desires is guilty of that sin, and punishable by GOD, as an Adulterer was by the Law of *Moses*, tho' he never commit what he wished or contrived.

Highly criminal then must all those nearer approaches to this sin most certainly be, viz. all loose, filthy talking, all immodest, undecent, all lascivious deportment of what kind soever, which are either incentives to, or the dire effects of such sinful affections and passions broke out into an ungodly flame, which may burn down to Hell at last.

And those weak and fond persons who adorn, and set themselves off all that they can by their dress and show, and loose behaviour, with design to draw others eyes upon them, and to inflame their hearts with unlawful desires, (upon which article they ought frequently to examine themselves who affect rich and gay clothing,) too shamefully prostitute themselves to the Adulterer's eye, and are the vile procurers and instruments of others sins. All such hunters for the Souls of men are much fitter for those places in which those wicked arts are too scandalously practised, than for the House of GOD, or indeed for any christian Assemblies.

For as we must carefully avoid all occasions, and restrain all *first motions* to sensuality or impurity in our selves, and must neither suffer our eyes nor our hearts to betray us into any sinful imaginations, desires or designs, so must we be very careful not to minister any temptation to others,

nor to gratifie our own silly *pride* and *vanity* so far, as thereby to attempt to draw them into that *sin* and *folly* which afford so much fuel to the flames of Hell fire.

Every thing therefore of *this nature* is now *unlawful* to us Christians, which a truly *pious, modest* and *good man* would not be known to do, and which he dares not own to all the World. Every thing is forbidden to us which is contrary to that *purity of heart and life*, which alone can qualify us for *seeing GOD*, that is, for converse with him in prayer and holy meditation, and for receiving those more clear manifestations of his goodness and favour to us in this life, which our Lord promises to the *pure in heart*. Every thing is forbidden which unqualifies, unfits our Souls and Bodies for being those *temples* in which the *holy Spirit* of GOD delights to dwell.

For such St. Paul affirms all true Christians to be. Know ye not, that ye are the temple of GOD, and that the Spirit of GOD dwelleth in you? If any man defile (or corrupt) the temple of GOD, him shall GOD de-

stroy. And again, What know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of (or from) GOD, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorifie GOD in your body and in your Spirit, which are GOD's.

In short, whatever is against the strict rules of chastity and continence, whatever is immodest, shameful and dishonest, or whatever is contrary to the design of our Religion, which is to spiritualize our natures,

and to purifie and cleanse us from all filthi-² Cor VII.
ness or defilement of the Flesh and Spirit, and 1.
to make us holy as GOD is holy; whatever
is inconsistent with and would be check'd
by a present lively apprehension, that GOD
is at that time the witness, and will be the
judge of such our thoughts and words and
actions, is here condemned by CHRIST.

And it must now be left to the ingenu-
ity and natural modesty of every one's
mind, and to his christian prudence and
good conscience, to behave and to govern
himself so as he ought, from a due con-
sideration of the foregoing principles, in
regard to all those particulars which cannot
with decency be otherwise treated of than
in these general terms.

And the best and the safest rule relating
to this precept, as expounded by our Lord,
is never to allow our selves in any thing of
this nature, which is not plainly permitted
by Almighty GOD, as Marriage expressly
is; or concerning which we may have the
least doubt, whether it be lawful, and so
pleasing to him or no: since the whole
danger lies only on this side, viz. lest we
offend GOD, and sin against our own Souls
and Bodies; and there can be none on the
other, viz. in forbearing whatever we on-
ly suspect may be displeasing to a pure and
holy GOD.

We are farther taught, that how diffi-
cult soever it may be to curb and govern
those two head-strong passions or inclina-
tions, to anger and to sensuality, which are
founded in our nature, and to bring them un-
der

Ver. 29, 30.

XX box I

der the Laws here prescribed by our Saviour, we must notwithstanding *yield our obedience* to these and to all other his commands *at our utmost peril*. For we must *pluck out our right eye, as he here enjoins us, and cut off our right hand, and cast them from us, if they offend us, or if they cause us to offend*; that is, we must choose to deprive our selves, tho' with the greatest loss or pain and reluctancy, of any advantage or conveniency whatever, tho' it be as dear to us as our eyes, and as useful to us as our hands are, when that thing is an inevitable or highly probable *cause or occasion* of our sinning against GOD, or is a certain *impediment* to our running our christian race.

And the great wisdom of this choice, in our always obeying our Lord in all the most strict and sublime and difficult precepts of the Gospel, appears in what he adds; *for it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into Hell*. For since the less evil is always to be chosen, 'tis evident that we ought to do or suffer, or to forego any thing in this short life, tho' it be never so repugnant to our *sensitive appetites* and to our most *natural inclinations* so to do, when we cannot otherwise avoid the everlasting ruin and destruction both of our *Soul* and *our body* in *Hell*.

Our Lord referring most probably to the third commandment of the decalogue, *Exod. XX. 7. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy*
GOD

GOD in vain, gives the first and most proper sense of that precept, in those words, *Thou shalt not forswear thy self; but shalt perform unto the Lord thine Oaths*; whereby all sorts of Perjury are plainly forbidden. Mat. V. 33.

To which he farther adds, *But I say unto you, Swear not at all, neither by Heaven, nor by the Earth, nor by Jerusalem, nor by thy head.* By which words CHRIST forbids not only all Swearing *falsly* by the name of GOD, but also all light, rash, customary, and much more then all foolhardy, impious, affected Swearing. Ver. 34, 35, 36, 37.

All Swearing by the name of GOD is indeed forbidden, without it be done upon a just and necessary reason; such as is taking a solemn Oath before a Magistrate, in order to the better administration of justice, or to the securing of Government and the weal publick; in which cases, as we do honour to GOD, by owning and appealing to his Omnipresence and Omniscience, and his power to punish us if we break our Oaths, so GOD expressly enjoins it to his own people; *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy GOD, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.* Deut. VI. 13. Deut. X. 20.

Taking GOD's name in vain may also in a second sense of that word *in vain*, as it signifies to no purpose, to no end, import all inconsiderate irreverent use of GOD's name, which is here also forbidden. The taking GOD's holy and reverend name into our mouths, without thinking upon him, and making it an interjection, as it were, or an idle expletive of our common talk,

talk, may well come under the *profanation* of it, or making that *common* which is *sacred*, which GOD himself ranks with
 Lev. XIX. 12. Perjury. *Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy GOD: I am the Lord.*

But in these words, *I say unto you, Swear not at all*, our Lord yet farther forbids all those *lesser or secondary Oaths* then current among the *Jews*, such as were by *Heaven*, by the *Earth*, by *Jerusalem*, by *their own heads*, &c. In all which Oaths, tho' GOD is not expressly named, yet he is tacitly referred to, when we thus swear by any of his *Creatures*.

When a man swears by *his own head*, or by *his life*, as that phrase imports, or in such words as answer to these, and are too frequently used among unwary, inconsiderate Christians, such as are for instance, *As I live*, *As I am here*, *As I hope to be saved*, &c. Tho' GOD is not herein formally invoked as a witness and avenger, yet those *manners of speaking* suppose a tacit curse or imprecation, which the Swearer obliges himself to, in case he swears falsely; and therefore they also ought to be carefully avoided by all who pretend to obey our Saviour's command in the matter now before us.

For since we have no *right or power* to dispose of what properly belongs to GOD, not so much as of *our own life*, or of our *health*, our pretences to have such right or power are formal *invasions* and sacrilegious *encroachments* upon GOD's sovereign prerogative to dispose of us, and of all that is ours, as he himself pleases. Our

Our Lord therefore allows his Disciples to use only bare simple affirmations or denials, or at most to enforce what we assert, deny, or promise, by a more vehement asseveration or doubling the affirmative or negative which we make use of; but still without the addition of Swearing either by the name of GOD, or by any of his Creatures.

But let your communication be yea, yea; Mar. V. 37. nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than this, saith our Lord, cometh of evil; that is, it cometh either from the evil one, as the Devil is sometimes styled, who tempts men thus often to perjury as well as to falshood and lies, of which he is called the Father; or from irreverence towards GOD, and neglect of that regard which is due to him from us.

But sometimes this profane Swearing amongst some who should be Christians, seems to proceed from another very bad cause, of which the Devil is at the bottom too, viz. from a sottish affectation of seeming irreligious as well as being so; as if it were a mark of courage, and not the most brutal fool-hardiness in the world, for a poor worm of a man to despise and to affront his Maker, and to dare to be damned.

These common, customary, affected Swearers are certainly men of as little true sense as of religion; since they go to the Devil upon the most idle errand in the world, having not so much as one grain of Pleasure or Profit or Honour to put into the

scales, against the loss of their immortal Souls, and the lying for ever in that Hell to which they have so often devoted themselves or others, and which they have so often wished and prayed for.

But let your communication be that way: for whatever is more than this, faith our Lord, counts of evil; that is, it counts either from the evil eye, as the Devil is sometimes styled, who tempts men thus often to sin as well as to assured and last, of which he is called the Father; or from inwardness towards GOD, and neglect of that regard which is due to him from us. But sometimes this prayer seems to proceed from another very bad cause, of which the Devil is at the bottom. From a selfish affection of self, as if it were a mark of courage, and not the most hateful self-baiting in the world, for a poor worm of a man to despise and to affront his Maker, and to dare to be damned. These common, customary, affected strains are certainly men of as little use as of religion; since they go to the Devil upon the most idle wares in the world, having not so much as one grain of true love or profit or honour to put into the scales to pay for their V.

SUNDAY XIX.

Of not resisting Evil. Of the Love of Enemies. How a Christian ought to behave himself when injuriously treated. Motives to the practice of these difficult Duties; from the necessity of performing them in obedience to CHRIST; from the high honour of being the Children of GOD, and resembling him; and from the greatness of the Reward. The folly and sin of vain Glory. The danger and great evil of Hypocrisy. The care we ought to take against this Sin. That we ought to design the honour of GOD, at least by a general intention, and to give him the Glory of any good thing he inclines, and enables us to do. What it is, to do all to the Glory of GOD; and when we may be said so to do.

OUR Lord having mentioned that *Mar. V. 38.* permission given to the hard-hearted Jews of taking a severe revenge upon any offending Brother, by requiring the Judge to award *an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,* in his following discourse gives an undeniable proof of the excellency and advantage of the Christian *Ver. 39, 40.* above the Jewish dispensation. *41, 42.*

But

But I say unto you, resist not evil, or rather, resist not *the evil* and injurious *Man*; whereby he forbids his Disciples to rise up or to stand up against, that is, to oppose and resist with the same or the like fierceness and violence, with the same fraud or injustice and ill usage, those who assault, affront, or any way injure them.

We must not therefore oppose force to force in any of those or the like more tolerable injuries which CHRIST mentions; we must not pay them in their own coin, by rendering them evil for evil, or railing for railing, or any other way returning upon them the contumely and rudeness, or the violence and wrong they have offered to us.

This general Rule our Lord farther explains in three particular instances, commanding us to turn the other Cheek to him who hath smitten us on one Cheek; to part with our Cloak to him who hath taken away our Coat, by fraud or violence; and to go two miles with him, who hath unjustly compelled us to go one in his service. The first of these imports some affront, or some slight hurt done to our persons, or to our reputation or honour, as the world calls it; the second, some wrong done to us in our goods or possessions; and the third, in our liberty.

Now this Command, to turn the other Cheek, obliges us to be careful not to inflame, or rather not to make, as we say, a quarrel, by giving the second blow, or by returning the affront or the ill-language

guage which we receive; nor to take our revenge upon the Aggressor, by dealing as ill by him as he hath dealt by us. And so parting with our Cloak also, and going two Miles instead of one, import and oblige us not only not to revenge our selves in any kind; but farther yet, to venture or even to choose to suffer a second affront, or a second invasion of our property and liberty at some other time, or by the same or some other person, rather than forcibly to resist the first, and so give the reins to our passion. We must never suffer our selves, by any such provocation, to be transported out of the truly Christian temper of love and mildness, of forbearance, and readiness to forgive even the greatest injuries, into that unchristian, bellish spirit of wrath fury, and implacable revenge.

In short, we Christians are hereby commanded to bear patiently these and the like less considerable injuries, such contumelies, affronts, or lighter invasions, either of our reputation, or our property, or our liberty, as our Lord here mentions. These we ought to bear and neglect, if not despise, with a generous and truly Christian magnanimity and evenness of temper. And we must choose rather to venture suffering a second wrong, or another loss of the same kind, than so violently to oppose or to revenge the first, as may possibly end in a greater mischief, perhaps maiming, or blood-shed, either to our Brother, or our selves.

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We must never then be prevailed upon, if we will be CHRIST's Disciples indeed, by such or any other provocations, to depart from those standing Laws of *universal love and good will* towards all our Brethren, of *mercy and charity, of meekness and forgiveness* even of the greatest wrongs; all which are so essential and fundamental to that Religion we profess, and are so indispensably bound upon us, both by the express *Commands*, and by the illustrious *Example* of our blessed Lord and Master.

Mar. V. 42. And that other Precept of this kind, which our Saviour adds, *Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away*, plainly obliges us to be ready to assist and to accommodate all men in all things, so far as the rules of *Christian Prudence*, and our other obligations and circumstances will permit; and especially with relation had to the foregoing directions; if our denial may probably prove the occasion of a quarrel between us, of the man's being angry and injurious to us, and our being thereby tempted to the like passion and ill will against him.

We must therefore, as far as we can, prevent all occasions of Sin, and that not only with regard to our selves, but with regard to every one of our Brethren also, whom we cannot love as we do our selves, unless we endeavour to be in this sense their keepers too, as well as we are or ought to be our own.

Again

Again, our Lord reflecting on that Com- Mar. V. 43. mand given to the Jews, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*, and also upon their inhumane custom of *hating their Enemies*, and of esteeming all to be such, who were not of their own Nation or Religion; He strictly enjoins his Disciples not only not to hate their Enemies, according to that false addition the Jews had made to those words; but to love, to bless, to do good to, and to pray for their Enemies, that is, for those who curse, hate, despitefully use and persecute them.

It may be useful here to observe, with St. Chrysostom, by what steps and degrees our Lord leads up his Disciples to this height and perfection of brotherly-kindness, to that invincible meekness, and patience, and God-like charity and beneficence, which make so great a part, and is so noble and distinguishing a character of the Christian Religion. *But I say unto you, love your enemies, &c.*

First, As that pious and learned Father observes, our Lord here forbids all rash and causeless anger, all immoderate transports of passion and resentment, under a very severe penalty. Next he threatens all provoking, opprobrious and contemptuous Language, such as *Racha*, and *thou Fool*, with yet farther degrees of punishment. Then he commands Restitution to be made for any injury we may have done, and reconciliation to be attempted with an offended Brother, before we presume to pray to, or to offer any Sacrifice to GOD; *Leave*

Mat. V. 24, *Leave there thy gift before the Altar, and go thy way, be reconciled to thy Brother ; and agree with thine Adversary quickly.*

Ver. 39, 40. And he farther commands us, *not to resist evil, or not to oppose the injurious Man with the same rudeness, force and violence which he uses towards us ; then to turn the other Cheek, to let go the Cloak after the Coat, and voluntarily to go a second mile with an invader of our Liberty ; that is, as was above shewn, not only to bear the first affront or wrong patiently, but to expose our selves to a second injury, and to hazard suffering yet more, rather than to revenge the first ill treatment, with the apparent danger of bringing a greater mischief upon our selves, or upon the unjust aggressors, by our first giving way to, and then being carried away by a furious un-governed rage, and desire of revenge.*

Ver. 44. Our Lord therefore doth not only command us not to hate, but on the contrary, *to love our Enemies ; that is, to bear an hearty good will and friendly disposition towards those who hate, revile and harm us all they can. The most implacable Enemy is still our Neighbour, and is still our Brother too, and we must therefore love him as we do our selves ; we must pity that ignorance, weakness and folly, which betray'd him into that Sin, and we must endeavour his recovery out of the snare of the Devil, with the true affection and tenderness of sincere and generous friends.*

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We must *blefs them who curse us*; we must not only *ſpeak all the good we can* with truth, of thoſe who falſly defame and *ſpeak evil of us*; but we muſt return kind and ſoft and good words, to the moſt bitter imprecations or reproaches of unbred, impotent, enraged Men. All which muſt raiſe no other *paſſion* in us, than that of *pity*, for the apparent diſtraction of thoſe who are thus miſerably broke looſe from themſelves, and are at preſent out of the true uſe of their reaſon.

We muſt *do good to them that hate us*; as *hatred* imports a ſettled *ill will*, and malicious deſire of, and rejoicing at any harm which may happen to thoſe whom men ſo hate, and is more dangerous and more provoking than an injurious hostile action, or a ſharp reproach or calumny. So our Lord here commands us to requite and outvy this greater degree of *ſpite and ill nature*, with a yet higher meaſure and inſtance of *Charity and Beneficence*. For we are ſtrictly enjoined to do all *good offices* whatever to thoſe who are ready to do all *ill ones* to us. We muſt feed, cloath, ſuccour and relieve thoſe upon all occaſions, who would ſtarve and undo us; we muſt do all we can to *preſerve* their lives, credits and eſtates, who would *deſtroy* ours; and we muſt both rejoice at, and as far as we are able, promote their *good and welfare* in every kind, who thirſt after and endeavour our *ruine and deſtruction*.

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We must yet farther pray for those who despitefully use and persecute us. Now as these words imply all sorts of ill usage, affronts, injuries and molestations, which rage and malice can suggest; so are we here obliged to rise to a yet nobler pitch of Charity, and instance of our Brotherly love. If our Enemy, after all our invincible patience and good offices we have done, in order to invite and provoke him to lay aside his enmity, shall yet proceed to the most cruel, outrageous, and spiteful treatment of us, we must then have recourse to Heaven, and we must earnestly pray to GOD, for mercy and pardon for him, who will have no mercy either upon himself or upon us; we must beg of GOD that he will open his Eyes, and shew him his error, and change his mind, and give him all that grace and all that good he stands in need of, in reference to this, and to the next life.

Thus must we Christians, if we will live up to our high calling, proportion our meekness and patience, our forgiveness and beneficence, our love and charity, to the greatness and number of the indignities and wrongs which we suffer from others. We must requite and try to overcome the worst man's aversion and enmity with our love and good will; his cursing with our blessing; or his reviling opprobrious ill words, with our kind, friendly, and good ones; his hatred and design to harm and mischief us, with doing him all the good we can. And thus must we recompence the greatest evils

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we can receive, with the greatest good we can do: for such is our hearty and fervent Prayer to GOD for the recovery and final Salvation of those, who despitefully use and persecute us with the most implacable hatred and incorrigible inhumanity.

Now these heroick and nobler instances of Christian fortitude and magnanimity, of Christian meekness, patience, and charity, to which we are so indispensably obliged by the expresse commands of our Lord, are, as we may very easily find in our selves, very much against the grain and the bent of our depraved nature, as well as most directly contrary to the prevailing maxims and generally received customs of the world.

Mar. V. 44.

Our Lord therefore is pleased to encourage, and as it were to enforce our obedience to these no less necessary than difficult parts of Self-denial, by three most powerful arguments or motives in the following words.

First, That we do hereby best and most truly resemble that GOD and Father of ours, from whom we are originally descended; whose Children we do best both know and prove our selves to be by our practising that patience, mercy, forgiveness, and beneficence, which are so essential to the nature of GOD; and of which nature we do partake in some measure, when we thus imitate the invincible clemency, kindness and goodness of our heavenly Father: For he makes his Sun to rise

on the evil, and sendeth rain on the unjust also; he gives fruitful seasons, and doth good as well to those who despise, neglect and disobey him, as to the good and the just, to those who fear, love and obey him.

Now as it is the highest *Honour* our nature is capable of, to be like to **G O D** the sovereign good, in any kind and degree; so it is also our greatest *advantage*: for the nearer we approach to him in the frame and temper of our minds, the more we retrieve of that image of **G O D**, in which he at first created Man; and the more of that god-like, long-suffering, insuperable goodness and charity we express in our behaviour towards our offending Brother, the more interest we are sure to have in his Love. He cannot but love those most, who take most care to please and obey him, and to be transformed into his likeness and divine Image, and who do most steadily aim at, and imitate the greatest measures of that universal kindness, mercy and beneficence, or goodness, which is the excellency and perfection of **G O D** himself.

Mat. V. 45,
48.

Ver. 46.

The consideration of that great and eternal *Reward* which we may expect from **G O D**, is another motive our Lord makes use of to engage us to the practice of these hard, and to our depraved natures unassisted by **G O D**'s Grace, impossible duties. This is intimated in the Question; For if you love them which love you, what reward have you, since Publicans, who are esteemed the

worst

worst of men, and the most profligate Sinners, *do the same*? But this temper and procedure towards our Brethren, our thus *doing good against evil*, out of regard to CHRIST's commands, and in imitation of GOD's *goodness*, will certainly be rewarded by GOD, both with his *favour* and *blessing* here, and with that *eternal life*, which is the great and peculiar promise of the Gospel.

The obligation which our Righteousness, as we are Christians, lays upon us, *to do more than others do*, to outdo those who want those aids and encouragements which Christianity affords us, is here proposed as another argument to stir us up to the careful performance of what our Lord here enjoins us. The Publican and the Heathen *use to love, to salute and embrace those who love them*. But now we are obliged to do something more than they do; our *meekness* and our *patience*, our *forbearance* and *forgiveness* must certainly exceed that of the Publicans and Sinners, as well as our *Righteousness* must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, who had the greatest repute for piety and holiness, if ever we hope to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

We must therefore on all such occasions, do honour and credit to that holy Religion, which the Son of GOD came down from Heaven to teach and to exemplify to us, which entitles us to the aids and assistance of GOD's good Spirit, and which assures to us infinite and endless Rewards;

provided that we take due care constantly to copy out and to imitate those divine perfections of *universal good will and long-suffering*, and doing good to our Enemies as well as to our Friends, in which we are here commanded to resemble the most perfect example of all clemency and true goodness, even *our Father which is in Heaven*, and to be perfect as he is perfect, or merciful as he is merciful, as St. Luke interprets these words.

Luke VI. 36

Our Lord cautions his Disciples against Mat. VI. 1, the Folly and Sin of those Hypocrites, who 5, 6, 16, 17, do their alms before Men with design to be 18. seen of them, and who pray in the corners of the Streets, and who do all they can to make their fasting appear to others, and do all this too for no other end but that they may have glory of Men, that they may pass for more charitable, devout, and holy persons than others are.

This false end or foolish affectation of the praise of Men in any duty of Religion is sufficient alone to stain and sully the very best actions we can perform, to that degree, as to make them to be neither acceptable to GOD, nor any ways profitable to our selves.

Our Lord therefore here engages our attention and our utmost care, by that so express caution he gives us in that matter, when he commands us to take heed, that is, to consider well, and to be ever upon our guard against that inbred vanity all men are so prone to in this degenerate state, viz.

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to desire to be esteemed and valued by Men like themselves, for what they pretend to do out of obedience to GOD. *Take heed that you do not your Alms before Men, to be seen of them.*

And for our better security against the sly insinuations and surprizes of *vain-glory*, and our directing our good deeds to a bad end, *viz.* the applause of the Spectators, he adds in a proverbial expression, *Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth, when thou dost thine Alms: and when thou prayest, enter into thy Closet, and shut thy door: and when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face, as at other times.*

All which directions manifestly imply, that we ought always to be well aware of the *danger* we are in of seeking the praise of Men, in those duties which we ought to perform with regard to GOD only, and out of obedience to him; and therefore we ought rather to avoid the presence and observation of Men, unless some good reason otherwise determine us, and to redouble our watchfulness, especially if upon impartial examination of our selves we find this to be our weak side.

And that these important Instructions may sink the deeper into our minds, our Lord backs them with a double argument, *viz.* the consideration of the great *loss* the Hypocrite sustains, he is to expect *no reward* from GOD hereafter, for any act of Piety or Charity which he doth; but only that poor despicable Reward which he

now receives; this is all he is like ever to have, *viz.* the empty blast of popular fame; *they have their reward*, saith CHRIST, in hand, and must go away with it, the thin air and breath of the deluded ignorant Multitude.

And on the other side our Lord assures us, that if we do works of *mercy and charity*, of *piety and devotion*, if we give alms, and pray, and fast, and humble our Souls before GOD, out of a sense of that obedience and homage we owe to him, and out of a desire to please him, and if we do all these things *so in secret* as to have no aim at *the praise of Men*, nor other consideration save that of approving our selves to our great Lord and Judge, and doing our duties, then *our Father which is and seeth in secret, himself will reward us openly.*

GOD will then most assuredly recompence such our good deeds done upon his account, and in discharge of that duty we owe to him with a crown of Glory, which he will give to us at the last Day in the open view of Angels and Men.

The Glory of *our Father which is in Heaven*, and not our own Glory, ought to be the chief and last end of all we deliberately design and do here on earth. *Whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of GOD*; and *that GOD in all things may be glorified*. Nothing therefore that we can perform is either acceptable to GOD, or rewardable by him, unless it be done with due regard to him, and to the promoting his honour, not our own: where-

as whatever good work we do *to be seen of Men*, that we our selves may receive Glory from them, is apparently done, not for GOD's sake, but for our own; and our thus doing it, is a kind of sacrilegious invasion of that Glory which belongs to GOD alone; since he alone gives us both *the power and the will* to do whatever is well-pleasing to him.

Now we may be said *to do all things to the Glory of GOD*, when we so love and esteem GOD above all things, that our principal aim and sincere *general intention* isto promote his honour and his glory in the World, and when we actually endeavour so to do upon all occasions that offer; when we have GOD and his Goodness, and our obligation to serve and to please him often in our thoughts, and do frequently reflect upon our own conduct with relation to our discharge of such our duty. We do glorify GOD, when we labour to keep our minds fixed upon GOD in all our acts of adoration, our meditations on him, and our addresses to him; and when we take great care so to order all our most indifferent actions, as never willingly and knowingly to break any of his Laws. We do glorify GOD, when we so set him alway before us, and have him so present to our minds, upon the approach of any temptation, as never to consent to any known iniquity, or so much as to deliberate or entertain any thoughts of doing what we think is displeasing to him,

him, whom we consider both as the witness and judge of all our thoughts, our words and our actions, and as our Lord, our King, and our Father, to whom we ought to consecrate the Service and Obedience of our whole lives.

Now we may be said to do all things to the glory of G. O. D. when we do love and esteem G. O. D. above all things, that our principal aim and sincere general intention is to promote his honour and his glory in the World, and when we actually endeavour to do upon all occasions that offer; when we have G. O. D. and his Goodness, and our obligation to serve and to please him often in our thoughts, and do frequently reflect upon our own conduct with relation to our discharge of such our duty. We do glorify G. O. D. when we labour to keep our minds fixed upon G. O. D. in our acts of adoration, our meditations on him, and our addresses to him; and when we take great care to order all our most indifferent actions, as never willingly and knowingly to break any of his laws. We do glorify G. O. D. when we set him always before us, and have him to present to our minds, upon the approach of any temptation, as never to consent to any known iniquity, or to much state deliberate or entertain any thoughts of doing what we think is displeasing to him.

SUNDAY XX.

Of the lawfulness of forms of Prayer. The Lord's Prayer, a pattern for Prayer. A brief exposition thereof. The great concern we ought to have for our Souls. We ought to have our Treasure and our Hearts is Heaven: To have a single eye, or make a right judgment of those things which most concern us, and to avoid a narrow, selfish, worldly Spirit. The folly, danger and sin of an earnest desire of, and pursuit after Riches. The impossibility of serving GOD together with that Idol. When we renounce the Service of GOD, for that of Mammon. Arguments against an anxious distracting care for the necessary provisions of this Life.

OUR Lord having forbid his Disciples to use such vain repetitions and much speaking, in their Prayers, as the Heathen did, proceeds to give them a most excellent and comprehensive form to be used daily by them, and that very probably as a badge of their profession. For thus we read, that our Saviour being ask'd by one of his Disciples to teach them to pray, as John also taught his Disciples, he said unto them, When ye pray say,

Mat. VI. 7, 8.

Ver. 9.

Luke XI. 1.

say, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c. whereby not only the lawfulness and expediency of using a set form in general, but this particular form of prayer, is both justified and recommended to us, if we will allow the Son of GOD to have known his Father's mind, and to have taught us his will.

He left us this Prayer also to be a *pattern*, according to which we may best frame all our petitions, both as to the matter, and manner, and order of them.

When we call GOD *our heavenly Father*, we do humbly lay claim to the goodness and compassion, which the best of fathers bears to his Children. We do thereby own his sovereign Power and Dominion over us, and the Right he hath to all that Love and Gratitude, to all that Fear and Reverence and Obedience we are capable of paying to our Creator and our daily Benefactor. We do also hereby profess that brotherly kindness and hearty good will we have for all the children of our common parent, who equally partake with us in that highest honour of being made after the same image of GOD with our selves; and especially for those who are redeemed by the blood of his Son, and sanctified by the same holy Spirit.

And as we are to make the *Honour and Glory* of our great and good GOD, which is always in conjunction with and promoted by the *Holiness* of our lives, and the *Salvation* of our own Souls, the *chief end* of all our more deliberate designs and actions, and

and the main *affair* and *business* which we are to mind in this World; so are we taught by our Lord to ask in the first place those things which most make for this end.

We first therefore pray, that *GOD's Name* may be *hallowed*, or *set apart* from common and profane use; that is, that *GOD* may be *honoured* and *worshipped aright* by us and by all men, that all that profound *respect*, *veneration*, and most *awful regard*, and all such due marks of *esteem*, *reverence*, and humble *obedience*, as no other Being can pretend to, may be universally paid to his sovereign Majesty.

That his *Kingdom* may come. That Almighty *GOD* may be every where *acknowledged* as the great *King* and *Lord* of the Universe, as the *Author*, *Governour*, and *Disposer* of all things so as he pleases. That he may regain his rightful Empire, by all mens returning to their due *subjection* and *allegiance* to him, at and by the preaching of the *Gospel*, who had revolted from him by their apostacy, and wilful disobedience to, and ignorance of *GOD*; and that this Empire of *GOD* may at last flourish with undisturbed Peace and Prosperity.

We pray that the *Kingdom of CHRIST* being thus set up and spread throughout the world, all men may set themselves to do the will of *GOD*, as to their proper and most natural as well as most gainful *employment*; and the great end of their Creation, that they may study to serve, and to please,
and

and to obey him in all things, with that *care* and *diligence*, with that *zeal* for his glory, and for the greatest good of mankind, with all that *love*, and *joy*, and *delight*, with which the Angels in Heaven perform his will and pleasure at all times.

Now when we do thus behave our selves as dutiful Children, we are then taught in an humble dependence on our gracious Father, to pray for *our daily bread*, that is, for so much of the necessaries and moderate conveniencies of this present life, as may best support and fit us for the advancement of GOD's glory in our place and station, and for promoting the good of others, and of our own eternal welfare.

We may then too, with some good measure of christian faith and assurance, pray for the pardon of all those sins which we have repented of and forsaken, in virtue of that *new Covenant* made in and sealed with the blood of our most merciful Redeemer; we may pray also for the pardon of our present infirmities and imperfections in our duty, provided that we are always ready to *forgive* all those who have or may at any time *offend us*, and to shew that *Mercy* to others which we beg for our selves.

We must likewise implore GOD's daily protection, and his help against the assaults of that *evil one*, the enemy of our Souls, together with all the *temptations* of the World, and of our own corrupt natures, and all evils whatsoever which might otherwise befall us; that G O D would not
suffer

suffer us to be tempted above our strength, but with the temptation would make a way to escape; that he would preserve us by his good providence from those circumstances which would be like to prove a snare to us; or however that he would preserve us by his Grace from being ensnared by them, so that we may never be overcome and prevail'd upon to forsake GOD by any wilful transgression of his Laws.

Lastly, We are taught to conclude with an humble acknowledgment of GOD's Kingdom over all, of his Power and Majesty, and to ascribe to him, as most due, all the honour and glory of whatever he is pleased to work in us, or by us, or for us, or any other of his Creatures.

To this Prayer our Lord subjoins a reflexion or consideration, which is of the highest concern to every one of us, *viz.* That all our sins will be forgiven indeed; but it is still upon this condition, that we do heartily and immediately forgive all those who have offended us, tho' in the most provoking manner, and most frequent instances, even to seventy times seven: and that on the other side, if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will our Father forgive our trespasses. Mar. VI. 14.
Mar. XVIII.
22.
Ver. 15.

Our Lord most earnestly presses his followers to have a due, that is, a great and constant regard to their true and biggest interest, that of their immortal Souls, and their certain happiness in the next life. He commands them to this end to lay up Ver. 19. to
the end of
the Chap.

treasures for themselves in Heaven, and not on Earth: to take no thought for their life, what they should eat, or drink, or put on; that is, not to be very solicitous and over-concerned for the most necessary things, but to rely on GOD's wise and good providence for a competent supply in the use of lawful ways and means to procure them; and therefore to seek first the Kingdom of GOD and his righteousness, as the best way to obtain so much even of the good things of this present life, as GOD knows to be best for them who are his faithful Servants, Friends, and Children.

In order hereto our Lord represents the mighty folly and horrible danger of an eager desire of and restless pursuit after Riches, and of all such anxious care and solicitude, even about those things which are most necessary to our support here, when that care may any way retard hinder or defeat our happiness hereafter.

Our *treasure* is that which we are most desirous to get and to keep, that which we do most value, and which we most value our selves and others upon. Now all that we can lay up in this World is subject to so many accidents, and can serve us to so few purposes, and for so little a while, (since our present life is less than a moment, if compared with eternity, and this whole World such a trifle, if compared with the happiness to be enjoyed in the next,) that nothing here below can deserve much of our thoughts and care or concern for it.

But

But now that *Treasure* which we are commanded to lay up for our selves in Heaven, or our being rich in those good works which being done out of obedience to GOD, or out of love to our brethren, will be by him rewarded with eternal life, is styled by our Saviour a *Treasure in Heaven* Luke XII. 33. that faileth not.

And since our *Hearts* will be wherever our *Treasure* is, we ought to be infinitely careful not sacrilegiously to rob our GOD, by alienating those Souls from him which he made for himself. And this we do, whenever we set our hearts, that is, our affections on any of these low poor transitory things, when we make them our *Treasure*, and expect to be made happy by them, and, when we do prefer them to the duty we owe to GOD, and care to please him. We do then by *serving Mammon* rather than GOD, set up an *Idol* in our own Souls, and so do depart from the living GOD by an evil heart of unbelief; we do then foolishly worship those Gods which we our selves have made, instead of that GOD who made us.

We must therefore, if we desire to be happy for ever, be extremely careful in the first place, that our eye be single, or clear and pure, that is, that we make a true and right judgment of all those things, which most nearly concern us and our everlasting state. Right reason enlightened and improved by the doctrine of the Gospel, or a clear understanding and knowledge of the true difference of good and evil as there laid down, is that eye of the Soul,

Mat. VI. 22

Soul, which, not being clouded with carnal or worldly lusts or desires, nor tainted with the false maxims and prejudices of the bare animal life, nor born down by the evil examples of bad men, will make our whole body full of Light, that is, it will direct us aright in the whole course of our moral actions and christian duties, just as a good or a well-disposed eye guides the natural body in the due performance of its vital and animal motions and operations.

Now this single Eye, or a due reflexion upon, and a true judgment made of the difference of things of a moral nature, will easily convince us, by comparing our short-lived mortal bodies with our never dying Souls, our seventy or eighty years here with an endless eternity, the contemptible, short-lived and unsatisfying pleasures and mean projects of this World, with the spiritual, solid and everlasting joys of the next; that we ought to serve GOD rather than Mammon; it will convince us that the Treasure which we are to lay up for our selves, and to set our hearts upon, must be the Happiness of Heaven, or the Kingdom of GOD; and consequently that our chief business in this life is to learn and to know and understand aright the design and end, the principles and duties of our Religion, and then diligently to practise all those graces and virtues, all that piety, sobriety, righteousness, that humility and charity, which alone can fit us for, and entitle us to that happy state and place.

But

But we may farther observe, that a *single*, or a clear and good eye imports also in the Jewish manner of speaking, a liberal bountiful mind; and an evil eye signifies an envious, covetous, selfish, worldly temper. Thus, *Is thine eye evil, because I am good?* Mat. XX. 15. And covetousness is called the lust or desire of the eye; because indeed the eye is the only part of the body which hath any thing to do with the covetous man's wealth hoarded up by him, or is any way the better for it. *What good is there to the owners of Riches, saith the wise man, saving the beholding them with their eyes?* Eccl. V. 11.

And thus, *If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness*, will signify, that as a dim, weak eye misguides the body, so a false, mistaken, corrupted judgment, or a mind blinded with the love of this World, or with the impure steams of bodily lusts and passions, or with pride, or with a covetous, selfish temper, will mislead the will, to make always a wrong choice. And if the light that is within us thus becomes darkness, how great is that darkness? If the reason of the mind be so far darkned and depraved by any vice or passion, as that men come to call good evil, and evil good, how great is that darkness? how truly deplorable is the condition of that poor wretch, for such he is, be his post and quality and titles ever so great, who is so far befooled with the desire and love of Riches or of power, or so infatuated by and enslaved to that pride, luxury and sensuality, or covetousness, one or all

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of

of which Riches so generally betray men to, as that he forgets both his GOD and himself, and lives in a stupid profound neglect, or perhaps a profane contempt of that *one thing necessary*, the care of his immortal Soul?

Now to awaken men more thoroughly out of the foolish admiration of, and eager thirst after Riches; and the folly of preferring those mean, sordid pleasures and advantages they pretend to give, before the solid joys of virtue and religion, and their eternal rewards in the life to come, our Lord propounds another argument, which cannot but prevail with and determin every wise and considering man.

Ver. 24.

You cannot serve, saith he, GOD and Mammon. As if he should say, Deceive not your selves, GOD will not be rivalled by any of his creatures. He will have the whole heart; or no part of it at all. There is no dividing your selves between so opposite and contrary Masters, whose natures, designs and commands are so incompatible or inconsistent one with another.

GOD is an eternal, infinitely perfect, spiritual being: Mammon, or the Idol of Riches, is nothing else but a large scope and parcel of dirt or land, or a great heap of harder earth or mettall refined and figured, all which can pretend no higher, than either to nourish our pride and vanity, or to gratifie the brutish part, the animal life, whilst we inhabit these earthly tabernacles.

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The design of GOD and of the Religion taught us by his Son is, to *spiritualize*, and *refine*, and *exalt* our natures, and to raise up our Souls from Earth to Heaven, by the *contemplation* and *love* of himself, by the frequent consideration of his wisdom, power and goodness, so visible in his works of Creation and Providence, and more especially in that great and glorious *manifestation* of himself, and of his *goodness* to his fallen apostate creature man, in the person and Gospel of his Son our blessed Redeemer.

Whereas the whole tendency, and almost universal effect of *Riches* or *Treasure*, laid up for our selves upon Earth, and of that secular greatness and vain shew for which they are desired, as that is opposed to *Treasure* laid up in Heaven, is to *embase* and *materialize*, if I may so say, or to turn our very Souls into earth and rubbish; that is, so to *incorporate* or immerse our Souls into the body, so to *sink* them down, and *fasten* them to sensible objects, as that they are neither willing nor able to peep out of their *dungeon*, and to make any *sally* towards their heavenly country, or to seek or care to return, and to reunite themselves to their first *original*, that GOD who made them for the service and enjoyment of himself.

And whereas GOD commands us to *love him* who is the first and chiefest good, and the author and giver of all the good we either do enjoy or hope for, with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, that is,

with all our *understanding*, will or choice, and *affections*, and with the utmost strength and vigour of all our natural and capable powers and faculties: *Mammon*, or the *Spirit of the World* commands us to esteem and love wealth, and its usual attendance, secular pomp and greatness, vain glorious power and authority over others, applause and fame, and inordinate sensual pleasures, with all our Souls; that is, *Mammon* teaches and persuades us to engage all our affections, and to have our minds wholly taken up with these fading momentary trifles and vain amusements, to the apparent neglect of justice and charity, of piety and of holiness, and to the utter contempt of GOD, and of his Laws, and of our own Salvation.

Again, GOD commands us to love our Neighbours as we do love our selves; that is, not only to be strictly just, but to be kind, useful and obliging, to do all the good we can in all cases to all men.

But now *Mammon*, the false wisdom and corrupt maxims and guise of the *World*, and love of riches, engages us in all manner of injustice, rapine, fraud, falshood, violence, insolence and oppression. It teaches us to take great care of our selves, and the main chance, *i. e.* our money only, and to be wholly unconcerned for all others.

And it is from this principle, that so many, out of a fancied obligation they are under to live up to the height of their quality, however they came by it, or more generally above it, and the figure they are to make

make in the *vain world*, think that they need all that they have, tho' they have never so much, and perhaps need a great deal more too or out of the wretched *folly* of *dying as rich*, as possibly they can, or being as *great in Titles*, or the opinion of men as vain as themselves, do feed their own vanity and pride, or luxury, or covetousness, tho' to the starving of their Christian Brethren, and to the apparent hazard, if not the certain loss of their own immortal, tho' by them neglected Souls.

Now we do then evidently renounce the Service of GOD for that of *Mammon* in these three cases, *viz.* when we do get wealth by any sinful means; such as are oppression, extortion, robbery, whether of the publick, or of private Persons, theft, cou-senage, making use of the ignorance, credulity, or necessities of others to their disadvantage and our own gain; or when we do so eagerly pursue after riches, as to neglect any part of our duty to GOD, and the necessary care of our own Souls; or lastly, when we do not make it our business, if we have great Estates, to consider of the best ways of imploying them, or do neglect to distribute a good proportion of what we are made Stewards of, to promote the honour of GOD and his Religion, and towards the relief, support, and the comfort of the Brethren of our Lord, the honest and industrious poor, out of love to him, and out of obedience to his commands. But *wo unto you that are rich*, saith our Lord, that is, unless you are proportion-

Luke VI. 24^{ly} rich in good works: for you have received your consolation. You that are full and laugh now, shall hunger, mourn and weep for ever.

Mat. VI.

from Ver. 19.

1 Tim. VI. 9.

Ver. 25.

Ver. 25, 31.

Our Lord having thus arm'd his Disciples with many forcible Arguments and Considerations against that vehement desire of wealth, that fond complacency in great and superfluous riches, that restless pursuit after those foolish and hurtful lusts, which St. Paul tells us, *drawn those who are rich, in destruction and perdition*, he now proceeds to caution them against all unreasonable immoderate care and thoughtfulness, and all anxious solicitude, even about those things which are most necessary to the support of this present life. Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life. Therefore, saith our Lord, with relation to the foregoing words; Therefore, because such anxiety and distrust of the care and goodness of G O D, is a degree of forsaking G O D, and leaning to, and serving Mammon, or trusting in uncertain riches rather than in the living G O D, and laying up Treasure here on Earth more than in Heaven, and so is apt to divert and take off that vigor and application of our minds, with which we ought constantly to pursue our biggest interest, that of serving our G O D, and saving our Souls; therefore for this weighty reason, I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat or drink; nor for your body, what you shall put on, That

That original Word which we render by *taking thought*, most properly signifies and implies, a solicitous carking care, a pungent afflictive diffidence, fear and distraction of mind. We Christians are therefore still both allowed and obliged to make a competent *provision* for our selves, and for those who depend upon us, by the ordinary means of labour and industry in any lawful and useful *calling*, or way of employment. And we are also permitted to lay up for our selves in store what may be necessary and convenient for us, and for our Families, for the time to come; since our Lord himself both wrought at his supposed Father's trade, probably for the greatest part of his life here on Earth, making Ploughs and Yokes and such other Carpenter's works, as *Justin Martyr* tells us from the most ancient tradition, whence he himself is called *the Carpenter*; and he had also a bag carried with him for his future subsistence and provision. Mark VI. 3.

But we are hereby only forbidden to trouble, vex and disquiet our selves with such *anxious fears* and *distracting thoughts* and *care* for the future; as either imply a secret *distrust* of G O D's providence and fatherly care over us; or put us upon trying to secure our selves by any *unlawful means* from that *want* we fear; or lastly, which take us off from, or hinder us in running our Christian race, with that diligence and chearful activity, and much greater concern, which the Kingdom of G O D,

and a Crown of glory and immortality may justly demand of us above all other things.

Now our Lord dissuades his followers from such criminal and heathenish *solicitude*, by many irresistible Arguments, to all considering minds. *Is not, saith he, the Life more than meat, and the Body than raiment? Almighty GOD brought us into Being, when we were not; and he hath bestowed upon us that very life, and this Body, which are as much more valuable, and much greater instances of his power and goodness, than providing for us that meat and drink which serve only to support this body for a little time, as the end is always preferable to those means which lead to it. GOD ought therefore to be always and chiefly depended upon by us, in the way of his usual providence, and of our labour and honest endeavour, for all that is needful to support this life and the body, so long as he thinks fit that our Souls shall inhabit these our houses of clay.*

The Reflexion also which we ought to make upon GOD's care of, and provision for other Creatures so very much inferior to Man, is another Argument against all doubtful, distracting, anxious thoughts and fears. *Your heavenly Father feeds the Fowls of the air, saith our Lord, and are not ye much better than they? They are supply'd with food by G Q D's general Providence, without any careful anxiety, of which they are not so much as capable.*

Matt. VI. 26.

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'Tis true indeed that all other Animals do all that they can to provide both for themselves and for their young ones too, by virtue of that instinct GOD hath planted in their nature, and indeed have no other business but this.

And thus may we, and we must do too in subserviency to the will and providence of GOD, by the use of the ordinary means in all lawful ways or callings. But this we must do still without any distrust of GOD's care of us, and in a due dependence upon him, and without fear of his not prospering our honest and prudent endeavours, or otherwise providing for us in such way and such measure as he knows to be best for us and ours.

Besides, our Saviour by calling GOD, *our heavenly Father*, whereas he is the *Creator* only, and the *Lord* of other Creatures, but most properly *the Father* of us men, plainly intimates, that we who are made in GOD's Image, and after his Likeness, and who consequently do stand in the nearest relation to the best of Parents, and are every way so very much superior to those living Creatures which he hath put under our feet, - that we cannot have the least reason *to disquiet* our selves, or *to distrust* his making a competent and constant provision of all things necessary for us, whom he hath placed in so much an higher rank in the scale of Beings, than the brute Beasts are, or the Fowls of the air. GOD having made Man only of all visible Creatures, capable

capable of knowing, admiring, and serving his wise and great Creator.

Ver. 27.

The folly and utter unprofitableness of such *solicitude* for the necessities of life, is another Argument which our Lord makes use of to dissuade us from it. *But which of you, saith he, by taking thought can add one Cubit to his stature.* Our own Body seems to be more in our power, and at our own disposal, than any thing without us; and yet here 'tis certain no solicitous care of ours can of it self avail us, either to increase our stature one inch, or to prolong our Life for one moment, beyond what G O D is pleased to allow us. The secret providence and order of G O D in the regular course of nature doth all, even where we seem to be most able to do somewhat for our selves; from whence it undeniably follows, that all our solicitude and our most busy care in these matters, taken apart from that good providence of G O D, is lost labour, altogether useless and superfluous.

Mat. V. 28,
29.

Again, *Why take ye thought,* saith our Saviour, *for Raiment? Consider the Lilies of the field, how they grow, &c. and yet even Solomon in all his Glory was not arrayed like one of these.* Whence we may argue, that since Almighty G O D bestows so much beauty on fading short-lived Flowers, we may be assured that he will give to us whom he made for immortality, and sent into the World for nobler purposes, and who do chiefly depend upon his care for us, cloaths as well as feed, without our an-

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xious and solicitous care for these things, which our care is an evidence that we have but *little Faith or Trust* in him.

Again, this our anxiety and distracting diffident solicitude about the necessary support of our Lives makes us guilty of such infidelity, as would indeed be more excusable in heathen Nations; *For after all these things, saith* Ver. 32. *our Lord, do the Gentiles seek.* They who either know not GOD, or believe not his particular Providence and Government of all things on Earth as well as in Heaven, they who withal generally know no better things, who have no assurance, and but a very faint hope, as some of the wisest and best of them indeed had of a better Life after this, their hearts are wholly and more excusably set upon these present visible objects of their senses, and all their care is laid out here.

But now we Christians, who look upon GOD as *our Father* in a more peculiar manner than he is even to the rest of Mankind, we who own his Providence, who are taught to despise and to live above this World, and to design chiefly upon the next, we must not act by the measures of these poor ignorant Heathens, who have their portion, their all in this Life, so that it is indeed a piece of heathenish infidelity, and renouncing our Religion, and all trust in and dependance upon GOD, to have our minds wholly or chiefly taken up and overwhelmed with the cares of this World, to the great disparagement of our reason, and
of

of our faith, and usually with an evident gross neglect of the life to come.

And to this end our Lord reminds us, as an unanswerable Argument against all anxious thoughts for the future, That our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of all these things. He who made us, and knoweth our frame, and from whom nothing can be hid, must certainly understand all our needs, and know what is every way best for us, much better than we our selves either do or can do. And since his uncontrollable Power and infinite Goodness make him both most able and willing to supply all the wants of his Children, 'tis a great degree of impiety as well as infidelity, to have such hard thoughts of the best of Fathers, and the best of all Beings, and the sole Author and Giver of all good; as if he would not do that for us, which every earthly Father generally doth for his own Children, who furnishes them with all that is necessary to their support and well-being to the utmost of his power. It is therefore our interest as well as duty, to seek first the Kingdom of GOD and his Righteousness; which shall be the subject of the next discourse.

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SUNDAY XXI.

What it is to seek first the Kingdom of GOD and his Righteousness. Reasons for our so doing. This the best proof of the sincerity of our Faith. We must understand aright what this Kingdom of GOD is, and wherein it consists. It is not only a state or place of happiness in the next life; but a steady course of true piety and uniform obedience to all GOD's Laws in this. It consists not in external forms of Church-communion, or in any bare outward performances of religious Duties; not in causeless separation, nor in affected modes of Speech or Garb. We ought carefully to remove the two great impediments; the love of the World, and the fear of Scorn and persecutions from ill Men.

OUR blessed Lord had shewn in the foregoing part of his Discourse, the great folly and danger and sin of laying up Treasure on Earth, or choosing to be rich in this World, rather than rich towards GOD, or rich in good works; and the inconsistency of an eager desire of, and pursuit after wealth, with serving GOD, and entering into the Kingdom of Heaven. He had also shewn that all anxious solicitude
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or distracting care for the most necessary provisions of this Life, was both highly *unreasonable and criminal* too in G O D's Children. And he now farther informs us, that we have but one great and necessary thing to do, in order to make a certain provision for our subsistence, and the supply of all we can reasonably desire, to make our short pilgrimage and journey of Life towards our heavenly Country both easy, safe and comfortable, viz. to behave our selves in all things as the Children of this our heavenly Father, which our Saviour both expresses and undertakes for in these words, *But seek ye first the Kingdom of GOD and his Righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you*; that is, as if our Lord should say, Make the knowledge and service of GOD, as He is now revealed to you by me, and the setting up his Kingdom by your obedience to all his Laws, the first and principal business of your lives; and then you may depend upon his Providence, for a competent Supply of whatever is needful and best for you in this present mortal state, in your way towards your Father's house.

Now by the Kingdom of GOD we are here in the first place to understand the Christian dispensation, or the state of the Church under the Messiah, who is said to have preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of GOD, or the Kingdom of Heaven. For this
 Mark I. 14. Kingdom which our Lord then preached,
 Mat. IV. 17. and founded in Repentance and in the Belief of that Gospel, is nothing less in its de-

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sign and consequents, than the restoring and setting up again that *universal Empire* over the whole World which G O D sent his Son to re-establish and to promote, by bringing all men to the acknowledgment of, and obedience to their Creator and rightful Lord; that G O D may be *exalted* over all, and we may be made *happy* by our return to our *original state* of entire *submission* to his *Laws* and *Will*, and consequently in his favour, protection and blessing here, and in the eternal rewards of such our obedience in Heaven.

And by the *Righteousness* of G O D, we are to understand all those *just* and *righteous laws*, all that *piety*, *holiness* or *moral rectitude*, that *justice* and *charity*, that *sobriety* and *humility*, and ready compliance with the whole *will* of G O D, by which he *reigns* in the Souls of all his faithful Subjects and Children, and gives *Law* to all their deliberate *designs*, *affections* and *actions*, which are all thus under his Government.

So that now to *seek first the Kingdom of GOD and his Righteousness*, is to take care before and above all other things, to bring both *our selves* especially, and all *others* too, as much as in us lieth, under the rule and government of G O D in the Gospel-state. It is earnestly to seek to be admitted into that *Covenant of Grace* which was made in, and was sealed with the blood of the Son of G O D; and to demean our selves in all things suitably to the honour and

and privilege of being his *Children*, and *Heirs* of his heavenly Kingdom.

To seek first the Kingdom of GOD, is to look upon it as our most important business and concern, the most proper employment and great affair of our whole lives, diligently and constantly to study and to perform all that duty and service, which we owe to Almighty GOD, as our sovereign Lord and our King; it is to be true and faithful subjects and servants to our blessed Redeemer here in his Kingdom of Grace, that Kingdom of GOD which he came to retrieve and to propagate in the World by his Gospel, and which will be at last completed in his other Kingdom of everlasting life happiness and glory.

Now we ought to seek this Kingdom of GOD in the first place, for many and very weighty reasons, besides that here occasionally alledged by our Lord, viz. that we shall hereby secure to our selves so much of the good things of this life as is best for us.

1. We ought to seek it before and above all other things, out of a due regard to Almighty GOD, and that relation in which we stand to him as we are his Creatures, Servants and Children. We offer the highest indignity to the great Lord of all, when we give him the second place in our choice and affections, or suffer any thing to rival him in our hearts. We do indeed then renounce our Creature-state, all dependence upon GOD, and our relation to him,

him, and expectation from him; we do dishonour our Maker, and we dethrone him in our Souls, when we pursue any worldly project or design, nay, tho' it were the Empire of the whole World, with more care and diligence than we seek his Kingdom, that is, *the honour and advantages of serving and pleasing him here, and of reigning with him for ever.*

2. We must also seek this Kingdom *first*, upon account of its own intrinsick worth, and its value to us, or the concern we have in it, in order to our happiness both here and hereafter. This certainly much more deserves our most serious thoughts and application than any other, than all other things put together. For it is not only *that good part*, as our Lord styles *Marta's choice*; but it is much, infinitely *the better part*, tho' the whole World with all its poor short-lived pleasures, useless and dangerous wealth, empty and vain honours, were put into the scale against it. The thus seeking and finding this Kingdom is also *the one thing needful*, since the salvation of our Souls is bound up in it, so that the whole World and all that is therein can make us no recompence, if we miscarry here, and are undone to all Eternity. Luke X. 42.

This seeking G O D's Kingdom of Grace here in the *first* place, or setting up his Throne in our hearts, that is, living in a state of perfect *subjection* to the sovereignty of G O D, and in *obedience* to those righteous Commands he hath given us by the *Messias*, doth also entitle us to, and puts us

us into possession of the best and the most valuable things; such as are GOD's grace and favour and protection here, the utmost perfection of our nature, and the true use of our selves and of all that we can enjoy now, and eternal life or happiness hereafter.

3. We must seek first the Kingdom of GOD, because unless we thus seek it with a due preference to all other things, we shall most certainly lose all our labour, we can never hope to find or to enter into it. And if we do seek it with more care and concern than we use in any other thing, we shall be sure not to miss of so great a Blessing.

'Tis evidently a most shameful folly, or madness rather, to presume, that GOD will go shares with *Nathan*, and that CHRIST will have fellowship with *Belial*, that the great Lord of Heaven and Earth will suffer such despicable rivals, as are *the World, the Flesh and Devil*, to usurp upon the right he hath to our Souls, and be preferred before him in our esteem and love. 'Tis a profane and impious, as well as a foolish hope, that GOD will so far prostitute his favour and kindness, and the high honour and privilege and advantage of being his Friends and Children, and being Heirs with CHRIST in his heavenly Kingdom, as to be contented with the second place in our affections and choice. We do boldly provoke his justice, as well as ungratefully despise the riches of his Grace in CHRIST JESUS, when we

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seek and pursue any of these poor, mean, perishing trifles, which must leave us at the brink of the Grave, with more earnestness and diligence and importunity than we seek that kingdom of his, in which we shall be made unspeakably happy, and shall enjoy the sovereign good to eternal ages, or an endless duration.

We have here now an infallible mark or touchstone whereby we may try the sincerity of our Faith, and know whether we are sincere Christians or no.

For by an hearty, careful compliance with, or a total or very gross neglect of this command of our Lord, *Seek first the Kingdom of GOD and his Righteousness*, we may easily determine our present state, whether we are the *Sons of GOD* by the *Adoption* of his Grace in *CHRIST JESUS*, or whether we are still the *Children of this World*, or the *Children of this generation*.

If we are more thoroughly concerned, and do more constantly and earnestly endeavour to know the will of GOD, and do strive to obey and to please him in every instance of our duty, more than to procure or to enjoy the Riches, honours or pleasures of this world, we may then assure our selves that we are the *Children of the Kingdom*, or that we are *CHRIST'S Disciples* indeed, since his *Servants* we are whom we obey.

But if our Souls cleave to the dust of the Earth, if our Hearts and affections are chiefly set on things here below, if we admire, love, and seek these sorry amusements

and entertainments of this animal life in the first place, we are yet in the flesh, and we do not, we cannot please GOD, any more than we are pleased with GOD, or than we do or can delight our selves in him.

And certainly they must be a very shameless, as well as inconsiderate and foolish sort of men, who can presume to think or call themselves Christians, whilst by their unholy and unchristian lives, they do crucifie to themselves the Son of GOD afresh, and put him to an open shame, whilst they neither believe his Promises, nor fear his Threatnings, nor obey his Commands.

Heb. VI. 6.

Now since the erecting and promoting this Kingdom of GOD, and the bringing in that everlasting Righteousness, which it requires, is the great end and business of the Gospel, and that which we are concerned, as we are Christians, to seek before and above all other things; we must take great care to understand aright what this Kingdom of GOD means, and wherein it chiefly consists; and then what we must do in order to find it, and to enter into it.

To this end we must so far consider and enquire into, as to be thoroughly persuaded of the truth and certainty, and then of the necessity and importance of the Christian Religion. We must also be thoroughly instructed in the nature, the main design and end, and the fundamental laws of this spiritual Kingdom, which our Lord came to retrieve and to establish in the World.

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We must not then look upon this *Kingdom of GOD*, or *Kingdom of Heaven*, only as that place or state of endless happiness to which indeed it leads, and where it it centers at last; but we must also consider it as a settled course and state of Piety, and of universal holiness both of our hearts and of our lives, as has been before shewn at large.

And consequently hereto, we must lay no great stress upon any outward marks or pretensions to Christianity; such as are our being visible members of that which we do justly esteem to be the *purest* and best reformed Church, much less of that which styles it self *the only true Church of CHRIST*, tho' it be indeed one of the most corrupt and unsound parts of it.

Nor doth it consist in holding Communion with any particular sect or subdivision of professors; or in a set of orthodox opinions, as they call them; nor in any greater measure of knowledge of the more circumstantial parts and accessories, or the controverted points of Religion.

No, nor yet doth it consist only or chiefly in the outward performance of such religious instrumental duties as are required of us; such as are Prayers publick and private, hearing and reading the Word of GOD, frequenting the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Much less doth it consist in groundless singularities, and causeless separation from our established national Church, or self-willed affectations of distinguishing our selves from others by better names

names than we can afford to other men, who may as well or perhaps better deserve them; or in affected forms of speech, or in a peculiar way of dress or habit, or other like things indifferent in their own nature.

But that *Kingdom of GOD*, and that *Righteousness* of his which we are commanded to seek, is a constant, steady course or state of true, solid, unaffected Piety, and universal holiness; 'tis a state of entire subjection and obedience to, and of firm dependence upon GOD; 'tis our having a due regard, and referring to him as to our last end and our sovereign good, in the main of all our designs and deliberate actions, as we are both taught and encouraged to do by the precepts, doctrines, and rewards proposed to us by our Lord in the Gospel.

And we do then most effectually seek first GOD's *Kingdom and his Righteousness*, when we do above all things pray, and study, and endeavour to have our Souls enriched with all those gracious dispositions and heavenly virtues, and to practise in the general course of our lives all those duties which our Lord in his Sermons or Discourses, and especially this on the Mount, makes to be the only way and means on our part for obtaining that blessedness he there proposes, and which he there sets down as the proper marks and characters of the Children of his Kingdom; who not only hear all his sayings, but are always and above all things most careful to do them.

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Now we must seek this Kingdom and Righteousness of GOD first, that is, before all other things, with more care and diligence, with more concern and application than we use about any other things. We must make it our principal design, and the proper and chief business of our whole lives, to know and to understand that Religion our Lord came to instruct us in, and then to live in exact conformity to his Will and Laws.

We must therefore have this our master-design, our great and indeed only important affair always in our eye. Our hearts must be ever upon this our Treasure, as the worldling's heart is set upon his. This must influence and govern the general course of our lives and actions. We must keep our hearts too and our tongues with all diligence, and must set a strict guard upon our first thoughts and motions, and especially where our danger is, where we are most weak and liable to surprize, either from our natural temper, or any former ill custom, or other temptations from the false maxims, the bad example of others, or that course or way of life in which we are engag'd.

And that we may the better seek, and the more certainly find this Kingdom of GOD, we must take great care especially to remove all impediments which may come or lie in our way. We must carefully rid our minds of all such opinions, affections, and inclinations, and prejudices, as may stop and hinder us in our pursuit after what we are so

so nearly concerned to find. Now all these impediments seem reducible to these two heads, *viz. the Love of the World* and its allurements on one side; and *the fear of the Scorn or frowns or persecutions* of the men of this world on the other.

1 John II. 15.

If any one love the World, St. John tells us, that is, sets his Heart upon it, and makes it his chief business to get, to secure, and to enjoy these perishing things, to the neglect of that regard and duty he owes to GOD and to his own Soul, *the love of the Father is not in him*. And if the love of the Father be not in us, we shall be wholly indisposed to seek his Kingdom, who then only reigns in our Souls, when our minds and understandings, our wills and affections, our desires and aims are all turned towards him, submitted to, united with, and regulated by his holy Will and Laws.

Ver. 16.

For all that is in the World, the Lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, as the Apostle there explains himself, *is not of the Father, but is of the World*; that is, all such depraved, inordinate, vicious inclinations to the things of this World come not from GOD, they spring not from a divine and heavenly, but from an earthly corrupt principle, and consequently they do not only not lead to GOD, and towards Heaven, but they are directly opposite to his Laws, and his Government or Kingdom.

Now by the *Lust* or desire of the *Flesh*, we are to understand all sinful gratifications of the sensitive lower appetite, whatever

ever is repugnant to the strict rules of Temperance, Chastity and Modesty, and to that Purity of Heart, and Holiness in all manner of conversation which the Gospel enjoins us.

By the *Lust of the Eyes* is meant all that Covetousness or earthly-mindedness, which makes us more careful and concerned to lay up our Treasures here on Earth than in Heaven, and to be rich and great in this World, rather than to be rich in good works, and great in the sight of GOD. / Luke I. 15.

And by the *Pride of Life* we are to understand all that vain ostentation of wealth, or affectation of power or of secular greatness, which tempts us to forget GOD and our selves; that high conceit of our selves, and elevation of mind, and contempt of others, upon account of our own greater wealth or figure we make, or hereditary or purchased Titles which we are apt to assume, and in general that false honour which bad men do commonly upon the score of these poor trifles give to, and receive from one another, to the apparent neglect of that true honour which cometh from GOD only, and which is founded in the fear and love of GOD, and in a wise, great and constant care to obey and to please him in all we design and act in the whole course of our lives.

Now all these things, which are not of the Father, but are of the World, are evidently very contrary to, and destructive of that love of GOD above all, which ought to be the governing principle of our lives, and the

1 John II. 16.

the rule and measure of all our designs and actions ; and to that *love of our Neighbours as our selves*, which is so frequently insisted upon in the Gospel ; and to that humility, that meekness, and that lowliness of mind which our Lord expressly commands us to *learn of him*; and to that *Poverty of Spirit*, which he lays down as a necessary foundation for that blessedness he promises to those only who despise this World, and all its *Pomps and Vanities*, in comparison with *seeking GOD's Kingdom, and his Righteousness before and above all other things*.

And on the other side, a cowardly fear of that scorn and that contempt of the falsely called, or reputed only wise and great men of the World, of the derision of profane wits, or the laughter of Fools, whose false Maxims and evil customs we are obliged to slight and to oppose ; or even a fear of real losses or persecutions for *Righteousness Sake*, if we come under the power of it, and are influenced thereby, will render us both unwilling and incapable of *seeking the Kingdom of GOD* so as we ought, that is, with a due contempt or neglect of all other things in comparison therewith.

Certain it is, that he who either loves or fears any thing more than he doth that GOD who made him, and who alone can make him truly and everlastingly happy, he who prefers any thing to his favour, or dreads any thing equally with his displeasure, is sunk too deep into the bare-ly

ly animal and brutish nature, to have any notion of, or any desires after a spiritual, invisible Kingdom, such as is that which we are commanded to seek before and above all other things by our Lord.

For whatever a man loves most, or sets his heart most upon, and pursues with most care and application, or what he either fears or dreads the loss of above all other things, if it be not the true GOD, who hath an indefeasible Title to all our Love, and to all our Fear, 'tis at least that man's Idol. It is that false GOD, or that image which he profanely worships, and to whom his Soul bows down. It is that Master whom he serves, and whom he suffers to rule over him, with palpable disregard to, or rather in defiance of the true GOD, and in opposition to his Kingdom, and the Righteousness, or the Laws thereof.

If therefore we will seek the Kingdom of GOD in good earnest, before and above all things, and with more care and concern than we do any other thing, we must take due care to free and to disentangle our Souls from all inordinate affections to, and concern for those fading perishing things, in which the men of this World place their Happiness. We must neither love the World, nor fear it. We must have the Wisdom, Courage, and constant resolution, by the assistance of GOD's grace, neither to be flattered nor frightened out of any part of our Duty.

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We must take great care also not to be hindred or taken off from our daily study and constant endeavour to please GOD in all things. We must so live every Day, as that we may always think upon CHRIST's second coming, and the sounding of the last Trumpet, and the voice of the Arch-Angel, *Arise ye dead, and come to Judgment*, or upon our own personal summons by death, with comfort.

So shall we then lift up our heads with joy, in christian assurance that our warfare being accomplished, we shall live and reign to eternal ages, with that GOD whose Kingdom we have fought before and above all other things; that is, whom we have loved and served, with a great neglect and contempt of the whole World, in comparison with obtaining his Love and Favour, with the desire and care we have had to please him, and with the just hopes we may then have to be unspeakably happy in his presence for evermore.

SUNDAY XXII.

Rash judging, what it is, and the danger of it.

An encouragement to Prayer. Of doing as we would be done by. The Precepts of the Gospel, tho' strict, must be complied with. Cautions against false Teachers, and how they may be known. An infallible mark of a true Christian. The Obedience of Faith, or a constant care and endeavour to know, and to do all that CHRIST commands us, is the only sure foundation, on which we can build our hopes of that Salvation which our Lord hath purchased for us, and promised to us on no other terms. The wisdom and advantages of true sincere Piety and Holiness. The great folly and miserable disappointment of all false pretences, bare outward profession, and partial obedience.

OUR Lord forbids his Disciples to judge, that is, rashly to censure and to condemn the persons or the actions of others, especially of those over whom they have no authority, viz. of Magistrates, Parents, or other superiors (to whom it is allowed to judge, according to truth, in order to reform those under their care :) as also he forbids those to judge, who have not such competent knowledge of all the circumstances

Mat. VII. 1, 2.

circumstances which render moral actions good or evil, as few take care to have, when they pass a severe, and often a false and uncharitable judgment upon their brethren, and very often upon their betters too.

These forward, ill-natured, rash censurers and false judges of others, our Lord declares, make themselves justly liable, not only to the like treatment from men, but to the utmost severity of GOD's judgment at the last day, who will then deal with them with that rigour which they themselves had given an example of, and so well deserve at their Lord's hands, who had so little either of love or mercy for their fellow-servants.

Mat. VII. 3,
4, 5.

Now from what our Lord subjoins in the following Verses, touching that hypocrite who was so forward to pull out the mote or little shivet out of his brother's eye, without taking any notice of the vast beam in his own, we may fairly gather, that this proneness to think and speak ill of, and to disparage our brethren, proceeds either from a gross ignorance of our selves, and that consequent pride which is always the child of folly and mistake, or from an hypocritical affectation of seeming better men than he is whom we thus censure and condemn, tho' we are indeed by so much the worse as we are more uncharitable (and censorious); or it proceeds from ill nature and an inhumane disaffection to mankind, if not from private spleen, and from revenge; or for certain, from want of true worth,

worth, and wisdom, and goodness in our selves, as well as from want of true love and kindness to our brother.

This hypocrite is so very blind and so shamefully ignorant of himself, as not at all to perceive that *Beam* in his own eye, those much fouler crimes of which himself is guilty; or he so proud and false as to disguise and hide them by his seeming zeal to redress a much lesser fault in another; and so malicious and impertinent as to pry into, and commonly to divulge with pleasure whatever failing he either knows or hears of, or perhaps wrongfully suspects his brother to be guilty of.

Our Lord therefore here propounds a serious, impartial reflexion upon our selves, and a due care to enquire into and reform our own perhaps greater miscarriages, as an infallible remedy against that rash judging, and thinking and speaking evil of others, which is the reigning vice and common pest of conversation, and which will make so terrible an article in the accounts of too many unwary Christians at the great audit; so great a part of the sins of their lives, whose conduct appears otherwise laudable enough, being committed with their unguarded, or slanderous and evil tongues.

Thou Hypocrite, saith our Lord, *first cast the beam out of thine own eye, that is, lay your hand upon your own heart, look well at home, and till you have amended all your own greater failings, and vicious, irregular practices, pretend not severely to*
judge,

judge, and to *censure* and *condemn*, much less to amend those of whom you know not half so much evil as you might know (and are more concerned so to do) of your own self.

Mat. VII. 6.

Notwithstanding which prudent reservedness in this matter, and tender regard to the reputation of others, our Lord both allows a judgment of discretion, and he commands us *not to give that which is holy unto the Dogs, nor to cast our Pearls before Swine*, that is, not to prostitute or cast away the sacred truths of the Gospel, nor those valuable and salutary admonitions and reproofs which we owe to our christian brethren, upon avowedly profane, or impure, or atheistical, and incorrigibly brutish men, who will be only provoked thereby to affront our holy Religion, and mischief us, and so to encrease their own sin, and their condemnation in the next life.

Ver. 7, 8.

And that we may be the better enabled to perform all these high and holy duties our Lord requires of us, many of which we are so very averse to, and are so wholly unable to acquit our selves as we ought in any one of them by our own strength, our Lord teaches us to engage the wisdom and power of GOD to be on our side. For he commands us to *ask, and seek, and knock*; and assures us that if we ask with a true and lively faith in the goodness and promises of GOD, and with that earnestness, importunity, and perseverance which so great favours and mercies deserve, we shall

shall not fail to receive all those good things we ask.

For if our earthly fathers, who are as *Mar. VII. 9;* short of the goodness of GOD, as they *10, 11.* are of his wisdom and power, nay oftentimes are evil as well as impotent, yet do not neglect their own childrens requests, how much more certainly and readily will our Heavenly Father, who is infinitely gracious, and kind, and merciful, give whatever he knows to be good to his children? Or as St. Luke hath it, *How much Luke XI. 9.* more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit, the very best, the most valuable and needful thing which we can receive, or GOD can give, to them that ask it of him so as they ought?

Our Lord next lays down the most plain, and withal the most comprehensive abstract of all the duties we owe to our Neighbours in these words, *All things what- Mar. VII. 12;* soever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, that is, we ought to treat all men in all cases with that justice and equity, with that humanity and charity, with that kindness and beneficence, with that favourable allowance and compassion, which we may reasonably expect and desire from them, were we in their circumstances, and they in ours. And we must neither think, nor speak, nor judge of them, nor deal by them in any kind, so as we would not be content to have others think, speak, judge of, or deal by us in the like circumstances. *This is the Law and the Prophets, that is, this is the most* *A 2* *gene-*

general rule, and the sum of what all revealed, as well as natural Religion, and right reason, do teach and oblige us to in this matter.

Mar. VII. 13.

14.

By that peremptory command our Lord gives us, to *enter in at the strait gate*, and to *walk in that narrow way which leads unto life*, we are taught, that however strict the precepts of the Gospel may seem to be, how much soever they are above the common practice, not of Heathens and Jews only, but even of the generality of those who would pass for Christians, they must be sincerely and universally complied with by us, if we will be his true Disciples, and hope ever to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

As *Gate* and *Way* signify our entrance into, and the design'd usual course of our lives, and that management of our selves and our affairs, whereby we are daily taking some steps towards our journey's end, and our long home: So to *enter in at this strait gate*, and to *find this narrow way that leads unto life* imports our deliberately entering upon, and constantly persevering, or going forward in that strict course of universal holiness, and impartial obedience to all his laws, which our Lord requires of all his Disciples.

Now this *strait* and *narrow gate* and *way* cannot but be very uneasie and difficult to those chiefly who are either swoln with pride and vain-glory, upon account either of their parts and natural endowments, or of the secular advantages of Titles, Ho-

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nours and power, or laden with thick clay, overwhelmed with great estates, in Money or Land, and blinded with the love of Riches, or of any other sensual and worldly lusts, desires and passions. All such Persons till they are stript and disburdened of all their clogs and impediments, that is, have their minds taken off from the inordinate love of and pursuit after these things, can no more enter into Heaven through this strait gate, than a Camel can pass through the eye of a Needle.

And that the Kingdom of Heaven still suffers violence, and the violent only take it by force, or that the Christian Religion, which is the only way thither, is a very serious as well as an important business, and demands our utmost care, and diligence, and application of our minds, is evident from its being styled here by our Lord a *strait gate*, and a *narrow way*, and such as few can find, tho' many seek to enter in at it. Mar. XI. 12.

And this is yet farther confirmed by our Lord's manner of expression, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* Luke XIII. 24. The Word which we render here *strive*, being taken from those earnest contests for victory in which men did all they possibly could, and used all the force and vigor they were masters of, to obtain the prize, doth plainly shew, that all the industry, courage and constancy we can raise our selves up to, is necessary in this our Christian Race and spiritual warfare: and that faint endeavours, cold lazy at-

tempts will never do the business here. Those who seek thus only, who strive not in good earnest, who do not their best herein, will never be able to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Our Lord therefore here proposes considerations capable and strong enough to engage our utmost care and study, and most earnest endeavour, by shewing that this is our nearest concern and biggest interest; since *the broad way*, which is therefore thronged by crowds of careless, unthinking, foolish men, leads to an unavoidable precipice, or to the certain destruction and utter ruine both of their Souls and Bodies: Whereas that *strait gate and narrow way*, which few have the wisdom to discern aright, and resolution to take, and then to pursue in spite of all the solicitations and allurements of the flesh, the world, and the devil, and of all the false maxims and numerous bad examples, or even the scoffs and persecutions of the men of this world, doth as certainly lead to eternal life or endless happiness.

Mat. VII.
15, 16.

Our Lord next cautions us against the danger we are in, to be misled by such Teachers as, under a great shew of more than ordinary piety and sanctity, may either ignorantly or maliciously set us out of that narrow way which they do pretend to guide us into. *Beware of false Prophets, who come in sheeps clothing* — These we are to know by their fruits. We may discover them to be *ravening Wolves*, either by such dispositions and actions as are dis-
allowed

allowed by the Laws of GOD, and by the plain rules of the Gospel; or by the tendency and most natural consequences of such doctrines as they advance.

If either their lives or their doctrines tend to impiety, or uncharitableness, or licentiousness, or to nourish spiritual pride or carnal security, begetting in their hearers a false hope of being saved upon any other terms than those of repentance, or forsaking all sin, and the obedience of faith founded in the mediation of our Redeemer; or if they tend to the promoting any secular interest only, or party either in Church or State, under the mask of Religion, or to any unreasonable and groundless separation from the established Church, or to raise and abet any faction or schism, hatred or variance, or to the taking off and lessening the obligation we are under to any Christian Duty; in all these cases they are *false Prophets*, and not *Teachers come from GOD*.

And not only these *evil fruits* which evidently proceed from a *corrupt tree* or stock, an heart vitiated with Pride or sensuality, or the inordinate love of this world; but their not *bringing forth good fruits*, the fruits of the Spirit, their not promoting Piety and Charity, and Gospel-holiness, both by their doctrine, and by the example of their blameless conversation, plainly shew, that notwithstanding all their pretences, they are *Wolves in Sheeps clothing*, they are false designing Hypocrites, and if they continue such, will be doomed to utter

utter destruction by the righteous Judge at the last day.

Our great Lawgiver and authentick Preacher of the Kingdom of GOD closes this his admirable discourse, which was always look'd upon as the *most perfect summary* of the Christian Morals, with two peremptory assertions or doctrines of the greatest weight and moment in relation to all he had before taught.

He first gives us the true standard and only infallible mark of his Disciples, of those who embrace in good earnest that Religion he came to teach and to set up in the World, which is *the doing the will of GOD, or hearing and doing these sayings of his*, that is, he assures us we are so far only Christians, as making it our first and most serious care and business to know and to consider, to remember and then to practise all those things which he there insists upon, and do take our measures, and do govern the whole course of our lives thereby. All other professions of service, *crying, Lord, Lord,* ever so frequently and ever so loudly and earnestly, nay, *preaching to others, and casting out Devils in the Name of CHRIST,* will leave us as much short of the Kingdom of Heaven, as they are of the main design and true Spirit of the Gospel, or of that inward principle of holiness, and sincere *impartial obedience* to all GOD's Laws, which our Lord every where so positively demands.

And then for our encouragement in a steady course of piety and uniform obedience,

Mar. VII. 21,
22, 23, 24.

ence, our Lord gives us a demonstration, in his usual and instructive way, by parables, of the great and indeed the only true wisdom, and most certain and endless happiness of a Life form'd upon, and governed by the rules and maxims he had given us: and on the other side, he represents the deplorable folly, and the no less certain Misery, not only of Atheism and Profaneness, and of all flagrant avowed wickedness and vice; but even of a formal outside hypocritical profession of the true Religion, or of doing some things in order to be saved.

The sincere, upright Christian, who every day, and upon every occasion *shews his faith by his works*, like a wise man sees afar off thro' time to eternity, and he looks at the last and distant issues of things, and so he *builds his house upon a firm rock*, that is, upon such a Faith in CHRIST, and such a sincere love to GOD and to his Neighbour, as directs and influences his general conduct, and governs all his particular designs and deliberate actions; and thus he *builds* indeed for eternity.

Mat. VII. 24, 25.

But now the half-way, or barely nominal Christian, *builds upon the loose Sand* of outward conformity and profession of the true Religion, or forms of Godliness, or upon doing some things, perhaps *many things*, as *Herod* did; that is, upon a partial compliance with some, and neglect of other equally plain instances of his duty; all which is a deceitful and imaginary foundation. And thus this vain man be-

Ver. 26, 27.

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ing overborn by every storm or flood of temptation, and at last carried down the stream, and perishes together with his false hopes and groundless security for ever. For *what is the hope of the Hypocrite, when GOD shall take away his Soul?*

Job XXVII.
8.

Our Lord therefore here for a conclusion establishes that great and necessary doctrine, *viz.* That the Christian Religion consists in such a belief of the Gospel, as prevails with us effectually and constantly to renounce every evil way, and thought, and word, and to make it our daily study and our chief business to learn and to do the whole will of GOD, in all things, and at all times, by giving several instances of the ill success of all false pleas at the last day.

It is not saying, Lord, Lord, that is, making the most solemn and open profession of being his Disciples, and pretending to serve him more than others, perhaps daily in our attendance upon him in his house of Prayer, nor being frequent at the Sacraments, nor a bare internal assent to the truth of what he taught, nor hearing many sermons, and talking about Religion, much less censuring those of another way for having less of that *form of Godliness* which may be without the power of it, than we have, which will avail any thing for our admittance into the Kingdom of Heaven, if we go no farther.

Nay, our Lord gives us yet more terrible and amazing instances of the final miscarriage of those who had eaten and drunk

Luke XIII.
26, 27.

in

in his presence, who had personally known him and conversed with him familiarly; Some who had prophesied in his Name, and in his name had cast out Devils, who perhaps had preached the Gospel successfully, and converted others to the faith of the Gospel and obedience to CHRIST, who will notwithstanding be utterly rejected by him at the last day, because they had not Faith enough, or Wisdom, or Courage enough to overcome the World, to conquer their own corrupt inclinations and passions, and to perform that will of GOD which they declared and preached to others.

Mat. VII. 22;
23.

If then we ever mean to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, we must be infinitely careful not to deceive our selves with the false hopes of those vain men, who doing as others do, go on in that *broad way which leads to Destruction*, and to a Fool's Paradise only. We must make it as much our business to learn and to practise all and every part of our duty, as the men of this World make it theirs to compass their little worthless designs and short-lived projects.

We must be thoroughly instructed in that whole will of GOD, which our great Lawgiver here delivers down to us, and we must be convinced both of the necessity of performing such our duty, and the certainty as well as the unspeakable unconceivable value of the reward, and we must have both these always in our view, that so we may be *known to our Lord* at the day of judgment, and owned by him then

then as his Friends and his faithful servants, by our having been about our father's, about our master's business, and by the constant care we have taken, and honest endeavour we have used throughout our lives to do whatsoever he commanded us.

Thus our Lord now finishes these his divine and wise instructions with this very cogent argument, which might alone persuade, or rather enforce all who duly consider it to a steady resolution, and an honest, uninterrupted endeavour to comply with all that he had there delivered.

This, as is said above, was taken from the consideration of the great wisdom and happiness which are to be found only in the choice and prosecution of true and solid Piety, and from a view of the opposite folly and misery, and disappointment, which attend both all worldly projects of being happy without Religion, and also all hypocritical pretences to the honour and advantages of the Christian Religion, without a constant care to do all that will of GOD which our Lord hath instructed us in and obliged us to.

Mat. VII.
24, 26.

Therefore, saith our Lord, because, as I have just now declared, no man shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven, therefore, as an evident consequence of that declaration of mine, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him to a wise man which built his house upon a Rock—And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them not, shall be likened

likened to a foolish man which built his house upon the Sand.

By which Parable our Lord plainly represents to the capacity of the most gross and carnal mind, the great wisdom and advantage of true and unfeigned Piety, or of the sincere practice of all those rules of the Gospel which he had propounded to his followers, by which alone we lay a sure foundation for our present and our future happiness. As also he as plainly shews the extreme folly and vanity, and miserable issue or event at the last, of all false hopes or attempts to be happy without being holy, or of obtaining the promises of CHRIST, without a due care to govern our selves by these his laws.

He who heareth and doth my sayings, he who diligently attends to, well considers, and always keeps in his mind what I have above delivered as the will of my Father; or he who receives my doctrine into an honest and a good heart, with such true faith in me and regard to my authority, as that it becomes a vigorous principle of a new life, or of universal obedience to all my commands, *him will I liken to a wise man;* that is, he only acts at the rate, and deserves the name of a prudent man, *who built his house upon a Rock,* who so wisely considers and orders all his designs as to obtain his end, and to prevent whatever might defeat his hopes in an affair of that vast consequence.

The first property of wisdom we know is to make a right judgment of what we are

are concerned in, and carefully to distinguish good and evil, with relation chiefly to our selves; and then to desire and to pursue those things which make for our happiness, or are best for us, in proportion to their goodness and worth. The next point is, when we have made a good choice, and propounded to our selves the greatest good we are capable of, our everlasting happiness, as our last end and most important affair or business, then to learn and make use of all those means which do most directly and certainly conduce to our obtaining that great end.

A wise man therefore will be infinitely careful not to adventure his biggest interest, the eternal welfare of his immortal Soul, but upon such grounds, or on such a bottom as he is assured can never fail him. And this can be no other, our Lord peremptorily declares, than such a vital faith, or full persuasion of the truth of all the promises, threatnings, and doctrines, and the methods of Salvation revealed to us in the Gospel, as governs the whole course of our lives, all our deliberate thoughts, and designs, and words and actions, and makes us diligent, and constant, and impartial in learning and obeying the whole will of GOD and CHRIST in all things.

This is indeed to build our Faith and our Hope of endless bliss upon *Jehovah* Isa. XXVI. 4. *the Rock of ages*, as GOD is styled, and *the* Isa. XVII. 1. *Rock of our Salvation*; and upon JESUS CHRIST, who was designed before all time to be the Saviour of the World, than whom

No man can lay any other foundation, as St. 1 Cor. III. 2. Paul affirms. Nothing short of such an unshaken belief of the veracity and divine authority of our Lord, as brings us wholly under the power of his Religion and of his Laws, can secure us from utter final perdition of Soul and Body.

Thus we see, that our making the obedience of faith, or a firm resolution and daily care to do whatever CHRIST enjoins us, the chief design and business of our lives, is the only immoveable foundation, whereon we may fix a rational hope of attaining to that building of GOD, that house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, which St. Paul saith, we know that we have, that is, we are as sure as if we were already in possession of it, that we most certainly shall have it when this earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved. And by consequence it must be our highest pitch of wisdom, to be infinitely careful that we proceed upon these sure grounds, and build upon this rock which can never fail us, whilst GOD is just, and good, and true. 2 Cor. V. 1.

True Religion then, or an uniform obedience to all the Laws of GOD, is the best, the truest, the only wisdom; since we are thereby most effectually secured from the greatest, from all true evils, and are most certainly entitled to all, to the greatest good we are capable of enjoying, either in this or in the next state.

Thus our building upon this Rock of Faith working by Love, or universal compliance with the whole will of GOD, and every

every part of our duty, secures us from all dangerous errors or mistakes in the matter of Religion. That good providence which takes so particular a care of the lower temporal concerns of good men, that even the hairs of their head are said to be all numbered, cannot so far abandon those his Children who have an earnest desire to know, and to do all that is requisite in order to promote GOD's honour, and the salvation of their own Souls, as to suffer them to fall into any errors dangerously prejudicial to either of these great and noble ends for which CHRIST came into the World.

This universal Holiness, or being separated and set apart for, and constantly employed in the Service of GOD, as we always are even in the works of our ordinary calling, if we act by these measures, and from these principles, is the best way to guard us against all allurements to Sin, all snares of the world, the flesh, and the devil. And this, not only as that sincere obedience entitles us to GOD's most especial care and protection, but also from the great power and efficacy of custom, and habits of virtue; which being bred and strengthened by frequently repeated acts, by long and constant use, turn our Religion as it were into our very nature. Hence it was that a devout person, when one complained of the great difficulty of thinking of the things of another world with that attention and pleasure we think of these

lower

lower concerns, replied, *I wonder at you, I can think of nothing else.*

Building on this Rock of a constant, impartial obedience, or doing all that CHRIST commands us, is also the best security we can possibly have against all violent assaults, injuries, persecutions, from all the malice of men or devils, as also from the terrors, stings and sharp goads of an evil conscience, which it effectually prevents, and consequently takes off that dreadful apprehension wicked men are under at the approach of death, *that to them most justly King of Terrors.*

And which is above all, *doing what our Lord commands*, and so living in all good conscience towards GOD and towards all men, is the great and only security which we can and may have, through the mercies of GOD in JESUS CHRIST, and the redemption by his blood, from that eternal death which will be the miserable portion of all workers of Iniquity, and of all those foolish men also who have built their hopes of Heaven upon the sandy bottom of outward profession, or of partial obedience, or upon any such faint belief of the Gospel, or vain reliance upon the goodness of GOD and merits of CHRIST, without due care to live by the laws he has given us, as is a plain contradiction to the most express declarations of our Saviour in this matter.

Since then the charging our selves with the daily practice of all christian duties, and *doing all these sayings of our Lord*, is the only way to secure us from the greatest evils,

evils, and to obtain for us, through the mercies of GOD in JESUS CHRIST, all the good, the greatest good we can enjoy, and that for ever; it must be our truest wisdom, as it is our highest interest, to be always building upon this sure foundation; since in doing thus, we are wise in the account of GOD and of our Saviour CHRIST, we are wise for our never dying Spirits, wise for Heaven, or wise for Eternity.

And which is above all, doing what our Lord commands, and so living in all good conscience towards GOD and towards all men, is the great and only security which we can and may have, through the mercies of GOD in JESUS CHRIST, and the redemption by his blood, from that eternal death which will be the miserable portion of all wicked of ungodly, and of all those foolish men also who have built their hopes of Heaven upon the sandy bottom of outward profession, or of partial obedience, or upon any such faint belief of the Gospel, or vain reliance upon the goodness of GOD and merits of CHRIST, without due care to live by the laws he has given us, as is a plain contradiction to the most express declarations of our Saviour in this matter.

None then the charging our selves with the daily practice of all christian duties, and doing all these sayings of our Lord, is the only way to secure us from the greatest evils.

SUNDAY XXIII.

Means whereby the practice of our duty may be made more easie. 1. That we take care to be well instructed in the Principles of Religion, and the design thereof. 2. That we propound to our selves the service of GOD, as the great business of our lives. 3. That we diligently use the means appointed by GOD, Prayer, &c. 4. That we carefully watch over our own Hearts and Lives, particularly over our Thoughts. Keeping our hearts with all diligence, imports being always upon our guard against all error in our judgments, against all first motions to sin, all evil desires and passions. We must reject at their first onset, and detest all profane, uncharitable, all proud, covetous, impure, all idle, vain, and useles Thoughts. Remedies against these. Prayer to GOD. Representing him to our minds as at that time observing us. Keeping our minds always employed in pious, wise, and useful reflexions, and designs, or business.

I Have in the foregoing discourse given as plain an account as I could of the necessary and fundamental doctrines and

duties of the Christian Religion, as they are laid down to us in the holy Scriptures, in order to their being better understood, and better practis'd than they generally are. And I have explained and enforced them by such considerations and reflexions as seem'd to me most evidently deducible from, and agreeable to those sacred writings, which are to be the rule and standard both of our faith and of our practice.

I shall now add some of those more general instruments or means, which may help to make the practice of our duty more easie, ready and pleasant, and the reward of it both more ample, and more secure, through the mercies of GOD vouchsafed to us in JESUS CHRIST our Lord and Saviour.

And first, we must take great care to be well instructed in the general principles on which our Religion is founded, and also in the nature, extent and necessity of performing those particular duties which are required of us thereby.

We must not therefore content our selves with a slight, traditional opinion, but must take care to get our minds thoroughly possessed with a firm belief of the great fundamental truths of the christian Religion, upon due consideration had, and attention given thereto; viz. That there is an eternal, infinitely good, all-wise, and all-powerful Being, or GOD, who made and who governs the World: That the holy Scriptures are most certain-

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ly the word of that GOD: And that whatever we there read concerning his nature and will, or the true differences of moral good and evil; concerning the redemption of mankind from sin, and misery, and death eternal, by his Son; concerning a future judgment, Heaven and Hell, &c. are all as true as that there is a GOD. We must be thoroughly persuaded, from our own serious and due reflexion upon them, and repeated consideration, of the most infallible certainty of all these things, and consequently both of the truth and great importance of our holy Religion, and of the unavoidable necessity of our complying with all its demands, in order to our being holy here, and happy hereafter.

We must also consider well, and be inwardly possess'd with a true notion of the nature, the end, and the design of that Religion we profess, and that all therein taught and revealed to us, and required of us, chiefly tends, and most strictly obliges us to endeavour to retrieve that image of GOD, in which we were at first created, and to return to our natural allegiance, by loving our Creator above all things, and loving our brethren, who are his Children, as we do love our selves, and by an entire submission to his will, and obedience to all his Laws.

And all this we must believe and do with an assured hope and expectation, that if we are thus led and governed by the Spirit of GOD, and do live with such due

regard to the doctrine and example of our blessed Saviour, we shall, through his mediation, be restored to the right, honour, and privilege of being the *Sons of GOD* here, and so come under his more peculiar care, protection, guidance and blessing in this life, and we shall be *Heirs of his heavenly Kingdom* in that life which is to come.

Secondly, Having our minds now thus deeply penetrated by these great truths, and thus raised above the mean perishing attainments of this short life, and being fully persuaded of that vast concern we have in, and advantages we may receive from the Christian Religion; we cannot, in the true use of our reason, withhold our Souls from our Creator and most merciful Redeemer; we shall, and we must then propound to our selves the Service of this great and good GOD, and the doing all and every thing that our Lord commands us in this Gospel, as the chief, indeed the only worthy design and important business of our whole lives; because we then are inwardly convinced from the foregoing considerations, that *seeking the Kingdom of GOD and his Righteousness* before and above all other things, is both the utmost perfection of our nature, and the most certain, as well as the only, and so most necessary way to arrive at all that happiness which GOD made us capable of; as hath been at large proved in the foregoing part of this discourse.

And when we have thus, upon wise thoughts and good deliberation, fixed our

last

last end, and cut out, as I may say, the whole business of our lives, we must then keep our eye ever stedfast upon our master's design, which must influence and govern the main course of our lives, and all our more solemn and deliberate aims, thoughts, words and actions. *Quid hoc ad vitam eternam? What good, or what harm will this do me in the next World?* How will this I am now going about stand in the accounts of eternity, when I shall appear before my Judge to be rewarded according to my works? This is a question fit to be often put to our selves, as a wise and good man is used to do in all his undertakings.

Acting for some known, determinate end, distinguishes a man from a brute beast; and the choice of a fit, and good, or the best end, and pursuing it by the most proper means, makes the chief difference between a good and a bad man, between a wise man and a Fool. We must therefore propose to our selves, as our main affair and daily employment, the highest and noblest end we are capable of; and that is undoubtedly *the Glory of GOD*, in conjunction with our own greatest and endless happiness, which consists in, and is best secured by our return to and dependence upon GOD, and cleaving to him with our whole heart, as the only true life and center of our immortal Souls.

And in consequence hereto, we must wisely dedicate both the first vigour and strength, and all the following course of our lives, and more especially all our so-

lemn and more deliberate actions, to his honour, at least by a general intention, to whom the service of our whole life is most due, upon account both of his having created us in his own image; and also having redeemed us from the slavery and punishment of sin, by the blood of his Son, and by the sanctification of his Spirit.

This pious, habitual intention of pleasing GOD in all we do, and of preferring his Kingdom, and his Honour and Glory, which is always in conjunction with our duty and our happiness, before all other things, will sanctify our natural and indifferent actions, and will turn them all into Religion, and make them a *Sacrifice acceptable to GOD.*

Thirdly, The clear and express knowledge we have now got of the nature, the end and design, and of the certainty, necessity, and mighty advantages of the Christian Religion, having engaged us in a firm resolution to make it our first and constant care and business, with a visible neglect, and even contempt of all the Kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, in comparison with the service of that GOD, who made us for himself, and with the hopes we have to be forever happy in and with him in Heaven, we must diligently enquire after and make constant use of all those means which GOD hath designed and afforded us, in order to our obtaining *this one thing needful.*

Now these means are especially, and in the first place, frequent and fervent Prayer

to Almighty GOD, both in our closets and in our families; giving our selves to the diligent reading and hearing of the word of GOD, and seriously meditating on it; attending the daily publick worship of GOD, and frequenting the Lord's Supper, as often as we have any opportunity for our so doing.

For our blessed Lord, who hath declared, *that without him we can do nothing*, (we can do nothing, that is, so as to please GOD, and to save our Souls, without the assistance of his Grace,) hath assured us, *That our heavenly Father will give his holy Spirit to them that ask him.* If therefore we pray to GOD so as we ought, with true humility, in a deep sense of our spiritual wants, and of our own utter inability to supply our selves, with stedfast faith and hope in the goodness of GOD, and the promises of CHRIST in the Gospel, and with that earnestness, importunity, and perseverance, which so great mercies deserve; and if we do hear and read his word, and meditate thereon with that attention and concern we ought, we are sure to receive all that light, and knowledge, and direction, all that guidance, assistance, and ghostly strength, which is necessary to enable us to overcome this world, and all the malice and subtilty of that sworn enemy of our Souls, the Devil; since *greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world*; and GOD will bruise Satan under the Feet of those who earnestly beg and depend upon his help.

Fourthly, Christian vigilance, or a continual watchfulness over our hearts and our lives, and a near regard to every thing that may hinder or forward us in our main affair, that of seeking and entering into the Kingdom of GOD, must be join'd with our frequent and fervent Prayers to GOD.

Mark XIII. Take ye heed, watch and pray. And watch ye therefore, and pray always, are the express
 33
 Luk XXI. 36. and the repeated commands of our blessed LORD.

Now this christian watchfulness consists chiefly in a constant application of our minds, and an heedful attention upon all emergencies and occasions to our spiritual concerns, those of our immortal Souls. In order whereto it puts us upon a strict guard against all manner of temptations, and even all first motions to sin, and keeps us in a perpetual disposition and readiness to embrace every occasion of doing the will of our LORD in general; and of doing all the good we can in particular to all our brethren, out of obedience to his commands.

Prov. IV. 23. We must therefore first keep our hearts with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Our lives and conversations will be such as our hearts are; and therefore our happiness chiefly depends upon our attending to, and upon the wise and good government of our thoughts, that is, both the apprehensions we have, and the judgments we make of things, and also more especially our inclinations, desires and passions, which are

are the first and inmost springs both of our words and actions.

Now to keep our hearts with all diligence, or above all keeping, as the Hebrew may be rendered, that is, in the best and surest manner we are able, implies, heedfully to observe all the inward sentiments, or opinions, and motions, and propensions of our minds; to frame our judgments, and to govern all our appetites, affections, and passions by the Laws of GOD, and the dictates of right reason; and carefully to watch, as against all mistake and error in our principles, so too against all first motions and tendency to sin, and much more against giving any consent thereto in our practice.

We must therefore carefully examine our principles of action, that so we may secure our selves from any mistake in things of the greatest consequence to us. Our Hearts must be whole with GOD, or wholly devoted to his Service, and set upon doing only what is pleasing to him. And we must be fixt and steady in the good resolutions we have taken upon such due deliberation and choice: and we must be always vigorous and intent upon the prosecution of our main design, of living to our gracious LORD here, and reigning with him for ever.

But keeping our hearts with all diligence, doth yet farther oblige us to be wary and circumspect at all times, to be ever upon our guard against all suggestions and first motions to any sin, that so we may early dis-

discry and resist the temptation, and avoid the danger we are in of being ruined, and for ever lost thereby.

Our LORD teaches us, that those things which defile a man, and which make him unclean and abominable in the sight of GOD, have generally their root in, and their first rise from the Heart or mind of man.

Mark VII.
21, 22.

For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness, that is, all dispositions to, and actual commission of any deliberate sin, are first formed, contrived and resolved upon or consented to by the mind and will of men. All impure fancies and imaginations, and those inordinate sensual desires which lead to Adultery, Fornication, Lasciviousness, and any other filthiness and detestable villanies of that kind, not to be named among Christians; all evil designs and contrivances of hatred and revenge, which lead to murder; all covetous, insatiable love and desire of riches, which tempt men to steal and rob, to lie and cheat, and oppress others; all that malice and ill nature which makes men envious at the prosperity of their brethren, or forward to detract from, and to speak evil of, and defame others, either by raising false reports, or by maliciously divulging their real faults without a just reason; all that foolish pride and ignorance of themselves, and of their duty, and of their faults, which makes

makes men highly conceited of their own advantages, vain-glorious, and despisers of their betters, and generally altogether negligent and incapable of what they are most nearly concern'd to know and do;

All these evil things come from within, and defile the man. All these irregular, evil thoughts, desires, affections and passions, and all wicked actions too, have their first beginning in wicked and corrupt minds; and if indulged, allowed, and consented to, make men filthy, abominable, and hateful to GOD, tho' they never proceed to execute what they purpose and design. Mark VII. 23.

We must therefore, as was said, keep a strict guard over our hearts, and carefully observe and check all first motions, desires, and least tendencies to evil; since the bad or good conduct of our lives depends in so great a measure upon the neglect or due ordering of these first springs of moral actions; and our conversation in general will be such as are our settled notions and opinions, or our last and practical judgment of things, and such as our indulged inclinations, affections and passions are.

We must therefore always narrowly watch against, and with indignation reject and discharge our minds of all evil suggestions and insinuations, to the prejudice of any part of our duty towards our GOD, our Neighbours, and our own selves.

We must heedfully beware of all irreligious, profane, dishonourable thoughts of GOD; of all uncharitable surmises, all rash judgments, slighting, undervaluing opi-

nions

nions of others; and of all false and high conceits of our selves, and of our own greater worth, and imaginary, or even real advantages.

We must never suffer our minds to be taken up with any malicious, or revengeful, proud, covetous, or impure thoughts; nor yet with any idle, useless fancies and imaginations, which can tend to no good purpose; nor with those childish amusements, which are below the dignity of our nature, and which make us weak and silly boys still, when we ought to be men. We should never suffer such vain thoughts to lodge in us, as we should be at any time ashamed to own, or to have them exposed to publick view, and so known to men, as they always are to that GOD whose judgment we ought most to regard.

For tho' it is not in our power to keep our minds wholly free from such sudden impressions and first motions, as either outward objects, or inward passions, and particular bodily temper do as it were force upon us whether we will or no; yet even here it is in our power, and so it is our duty, not to give way to, not to indulge or take pleasure in, and willingly to entertain and harbour such dangerous inmates or guests. It is always in our power, by the assistance of GOD's grace, and therefore 'tis our indispensable duty, to dislike and detest all such evil thoughts, and to withhold our consent from their abiding in our minds, as well as to resolve not to comply with those suggestions, inclinations

clinations or desires, which would lead us to transgress any Law of our Creator.

And in all these cases our only, and withal, our certain security is, to take refuge at the Sanctuary of GOD, that is, to have immediate recourse to GOD by fervent prayer; and then to place our selves, if I may so say, in his more immediate presence, and under his eye, by representing him to our minds as at that time actually observing our thoughts, and our designs, in order to reward or punish us hereafter, according as we purpose, and demean our selves, in relation to the obedience and observance we owe to our Lawgiver and our Judge.

Now since the Law of GOD reaches as well to our thoughts, desires, and purposes, as to our words and our outward actions; and since many evils are more easily prevented by prudent caution, than cured by long and painful methods; it is our wisdom, and a duty we owe to our selves as well as to GOD, not only to resist and rid our minds of all evil, vain and useless thoughts, but to prevent all we can their first birth, or arising in our hearts.

One of the best rules therefore for the good government of our thoughts, and keeping our hearts in due frame and temper, is to accustom our selves to employ our minds always, and upon all occasions, in such rational and useful reflexions, designs and projects, as we can hope to approve to the searcher of our hearts; that is to the Devil, the World, and our own

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corrupt affections, appetites or passions, may find us always busie about, and engaged in the prosecution of what is more suitable to the prerogative and dignity of our nature, and to the true interest of our immortal Souls, than any of those allurements are, which they can propose to seduce us out of the ways of GOD and Virtue, of holiness here, and of happiness for ever.

And indeed if we rightly understand the nature and obligations of our holy Religion, and if we consider that the most substantial and indispensable part of our worshipping GOD, and pleasing him, is performed by our *loving him with all our Heart, Mind, Soul, and Strength*, by cleaving to him, believing, trusting in and depending upon him; and that no outward acts of obedience or service are of any value with him, where those inward dispositions are not found, we shall be thoroughly convinced how very necessary 'tis to manage all our thoughts, affections, desires and inclinations so as he directs and requires.

And when our Souls are once thus effectually turned towards GOD, and firmly fixed upon him, as upon our only true center of rest, our last end and supreme happiness, all other things will look so very mean and so contemptible as not to deserve any consideration. All earthly slight joys, and worthless toils, will fall far beneath our most transient thoughts, and much more below our study and application.

We shall then keep our eye always upon our main affair, and the great project and bu-

business of our lives. And when we have once resolved, and in earnest begun to lay up our Treasure in Heaven, and to have our hearts there to, the sordid, low pleasures of the sensual, covetous or ambitious man will have no relish, no power to attract our minds, and take up our thoughts, otherwise than in a due care to live above them, and not to be entangled or hindred thereby in running our christian race with joy and delight, as well as with patience and perseverance to the end.

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SUNDAY XXIV.

Watchfulness over our words. Of the government of our Tongues in several particulars, viz. Speaking uncharitable truths, flattery, boasting, &c. Of watching against all appearance of evil: and that we do not yeild to temptations arising from our trade, constitution, &c. Another means to render the practice of our duty more easie and constant is, 5thly, That we do so frequently reflect upon the end and design, the nature and importance of Christianity, that we always endeavour after such farther degrees of holiness as are attainable by us in this state. Some instances of this kind, and motives or reasons for our so doing.

OUR Christian vigilance must be yet farther employed in carefully watching against and avoiding those great both sins and mischiefs, which arise from the abuse of speech, or from the want of a due government of the tongue. Of how great consequence this is, we may learn from our LORD's declaration; *For by thy words* Mat. XII. 37. *thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou* James I. 26. *shalt be condemned; and from St. James, If any man seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man's Religion is vain.*

And

And here we ought seriously to consider, that as our mind and understanding, all our superior rational powers or faculties, so our speech too, which is our peculiar prerogative, was given us by GOD for two chief ends, viz. That we might thereby glorify our Creator, and might be useful and beneficial to each other, and capable of civil society, and mutual improvements and advantages.

Now since every thing is so far only good and valuable, as it tends to, and attains those ends for which it was chiefly design'd, it inevitably follows, that our speech or discourse is then best ordered, and then most approveable both to GOD, and to the reason of our minds, and most suitable to the dignity of our nature, when it most answers and comes up to those noble ends of glorifying our great and good GOD, and of promoting the good and happiness of his Children and our brethren, all we can.

And it is as palpably evident, that all speech or discourse which is wholly devoid of, or which has no manner of aim at, or tendency to, either of the above-mentioned purposes, or at least which is any way contrary thereto, is only an insignificant, senseless noise, and a kind of degrading our selves into the *low form* of the poor dumb beasts, and hath perhaps less good meaning, and deserves less regard than the lowing and the brayings of those stupid animals, which GOD hath put under our feet; which reflexion may serve

to upbraid the inconsiderate folly, and ingratitude, and ignorance of their equally thoughtless, and more brutish owners.

And it is yet more undeniable from the foregoing principles, that all discourse or speech which in any manner reflects dishonourably upon GOD, and Religion, or upon any thing he hath any peculiar claim to, or right in, or which can be any way displeasing to him; all that discourse which is injurious and prejudicial, either to any other person, or to our selves, who are by this means peculiarly fitted, and so obliged to be mutual helps and assistants to each other, is an horrid perverting of this great gift of GOD, and ranging our selves on the side of his enemies, those apostate Spirits, who eternally blaspheme his glorious Majesty, and incessantly design and endeavour the ruin and perdition of his dearest Children and Servants.

We must therefore, as we love our gracious GOD, and our own immortal Souls, most carefully abstain from all irreligious, atheistical discourse; from all profane Swearing, and irreverent use of the name of GOD, and of his word, and from whatever can any way bring any dishonour, or shew any want of due regard to him, who gave us our tongues to be instruments wherewith we should set forth his praise, and promote his honour and glory in the world, and set up his kingdom, and the kingdom of his Son, by declaring the inward sense we have of his power, wisdom,

and goodness, and the indispensable duty as well as interest of all men's loving, serving, and obeying him.

We must likewise keep our mouth with a bridle, that we sit not with our tongue, by any words any way injurious or hurtful either to our Neighbours or to our selves. We must therefore be ever upon our guard against that almost universal pest, and spreading soul disease of conversation, detraction and evil speaking, or any way exposing the character and lessening the reputation of another man.

P. XXXIX

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We must be careful never to be severe and merciless judges, and not to pass harsh censures upon those doubtful words and actions of others, especially of those whom we have reason otherwise to think well of, which may bear a better interpretation, and may have such circumstances, tho' unknown to us, and may proceed from such principles as may quite alter their nature, and make them wholly different, from what they may appear to us.

And as we must never defame any by rash judgments made, or false tales raised of them, by our selves; so we must be careful not to divulge and spread what is said to their disadvantage by others, or such faults or failings of theirs, which we either have reason to believe, or do certainly know to be true, unless we are obliged to make such discovery by some consideration of justice or charity either to others or to our selves.

For all uncharitable truths, as well as rash censures, all evil surmises, slanderous defamations, together with all scoffing and derision, all slighting and contemptuous language, spring from the bitter roots of pride and self-conceit, and from that extremity of folly, ignorance of our selves, and of our own perhaps much greater crimes; or from envy and malice, and secret hatred and desire of revenge; or from that wretched itch of telling news, and gratifying the curiosity and ill nature of others, at the expence of a third person's reputation. And they are all of them the most express violations of, and palpable contradiction to that great and fundamental law of loving our Neighbours as we love our selves, and of doing so to others as we would be contented they should do to us.

Flattery also, and soothing up men in their sins, or in the vain false opinion they have of themselves, tho' it proceeds from somewhat a different cause, viz. from a most vile and abject mind, a false heart, and sordid self-interest, is yet one of the most poisoned and fatal arrows, which are or can be shot from a wicked tongue; since it always endangers, and too frequently compasses the ruine of two Souls at once.

The good government of our tongue, with more particular relation to our selves also, requires of us to abstain from all murmuring and complaining language, in regard to the providence of GOD, and to our either lower station in the World,

or

or our just sufferings from the hand of GOD, or unjust ones from men; since complaints only add to our sin, but lessen not our sufferings.

All immodest discourse, and the most distant hints, or images of any sort of impurity, and whatever but looks that way, ought not only to be shunned, but detested by us, as a language fit for beasts, if they could speak, and as a disparagement of the reason and ingenuity of humane nature, and a certain proof of our want of good breeding, and good sense, as well as of true Religion.

No corrupt communication, no rotten, noisom, infectious speech, as that word imports, must ever proceed out of the mouth of those who have put on that new man, which after GOD is created in righteousness and true holiness, since, as St. Paul hints, we grieve the holy Spirit of GOD, not only by impure thoughts, and all other filthiness; but also by all such foolish talking, and scurrilous, obscene jesting, by all corrupt communication; which piece of ill-manners, together with irreligious profaneness, and abetting all lewdness and immorality, is the chief pretence our modern fools, who make a mock at sin, can make to wit, in this degenerate age of ours. Those unfruitful works of darkness, of which it is a shame even to speak, are not to be once named among those who walk as it becomes Saints.

Eph. IV. 29.

Ver. 30.

Eph. V. 23.

All opprobrious and injurious language, also all hard and provoking words, the usual effect and breaking out of malice and

ill-nature, or of ungoverned passion, styled by the Apostle *Bitterness, Wrath, Anger, Clamour, and evil Speaking*, must be put away, kept at the greatest distance from us. We must therefore ever bear in our minds, and have this thought ready upon the most sudden provocations, That we are

1 Pet. II. 23. the Disciples of him, *who when he was reviled, reviled not again*; That we are strictly obliged by his command, as well as by his
Eph. IV. 31, example, to be kind to one another, to be tender
32. hearted, and to forgive one another, even as GOD for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.

Lastly, If we desire not to offend with our tongue, and that in a most heinous manner too, we must watch diligently and perpetually against that so common and prevailing disease of proud boasting, and sounding out our own praise.

This scurvy mixture of sin and folly proceeds from the same corrupt source of pride, and from ignorance of what we are above all things most concerned to know, viz. of our selves, with that other epidemical vice of detraction, or speaking as readily evil of others, as we speak well of our selves. And both these ill-laid plots usually center in the same defeat of what the contrivers aim at; no men being either less believed or less esteemed, than those who are observed to take all occasions, or make them where they are not, to lessen the reputation of others, and to establish and enhance their own.

Besides which, we ought sadly to consider, that all high conceit and arrogant boast-

boasting of any either natural or moral endowments, or our own acquisitions and improvements, is a bold and sacrilegious encroachment upon the rights and honour due to our Creator. It is robbing him of that glory which he hath declared *he will not give to another.* For no man can any more make himself a great or a rich man, and much less can he make himself a wise and a good man, by his own bare power, or natural strength and ability, than he could at first bring himself into being, or make himself a man.

But now spiritual pride or boasting of our own piety and holiness, express'd by *doing our alms*, or by *fasting and praying to be seen of*, and admired by men, &c. is yet both more foolish and more criminal too, than that of any other kind. For that *Faith*, or the belief of and the owning a supreme, almighty, and allwise Being, and those Revelations he hath made to us by his Son, and all those virtues and graces which spring from that root, is the most undeniable and peculiar gift of GOD, who alone is able to conquer the resistance our corrupt nature makes to his holy Spirit.

Either therefore the spiritually proud man hath no true Religion at all, and so adds hypocrisie to his Sacrilege, and makes himself still more hateful both to GOD and to man; or if he hath any small degree of piety and regard to GOD, he will not have it long. Every proud, self-sufficient man hath made a large step towards

the regions of apostate Spirits, whose fatal sin he imitates; and if his Religion cannot cure his pride, his pride will soon eat out and quite destroy all his Religion.

The best and the wisest men, they who rightly understand and know both themselves, and their duty, and their interest, have always just, *i. e.* very mean thoughts of themselves. They are always most forward to see, and to own their many failings and infirmities, and how great reason they should have to pull their hats over their eyes, as we say, if one half of their faults was written on their foreheads. They know how poor and silly things, those who pass for the wisest and the best men would appear, if all the vain thoughts and imaginations, &c. which slide at any time through their hearts, or sometimes fix too long there, were as visible to men, as they are to GOD's all-seeing eye.

To secure themselves therefore in so slippery a post, against the strong bent of their depraved nature to vain-glorious boasting, some of the wisest moralists have made it a rule, never to speak of themselves at all, unless it be necessary, in order to some very great good which they shall thereby procure either to themselves or to those who hear them: and that whereas they oblige themselves to think once before they will say any thing of any other person, or that can have any great consequence, so they will always think twice at least before they mention themselves.

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They wisely consider, that the folly and the vanity of a man's being his own trumpeter is much more taken notice of, and more severely reflected upon, to the disparagement of his understanding, and of his virtue too, than that good quality, whatever it be, that he proclaims of himself, if it were true that he had it, is to his advantage. And therefore their general rule is, never to speak any thing at all of themselves, nor any thing but good of other men, unless there be some great and good reason for their dispensing with that law.

And here it may be fit to observe, that by those *idle words* of which our Lord saith, *Men shall give account in the day of judgment, and by which they shall be then condemned,* we are not strictly to understand all barely unprofitable words, such as do not directly tend either to the glory of GOD, or to the good of men, which are indeed the chief and proper ends of speech; but rather such words as are some way or other criminal in their design or issue and consequence.

This appears from the subject-matter of our Lord's discourse, who was then reproving the false and malicious blasphemy of those Pharisees, who charged him with *casting out Devils by Beelzebub, the Prince of the Devils*. These he therefore assures, that men shall be judged and condemned, not only for their wicked deeds, but also for wicked, false, malicious, and blasphemous words, such as they at
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Mat. XII. 36,
37.

that time uttered against him, and against the miracles he wrought by the power of GOD, to the full conviction of all the people, those proud and malicious Pharisees excepted, that he was the Son of David, or the Messiah.

Ver. 35.

Besides which reason, the word we here render *idle*, is probably a translation of an Hebrew or Syriac word, which signifies not only *vain* and *empty*, but *false* and *lying* too; and so *idle words* here will answer to those *evil or wicked things which an evil man bringeth forth of the evil treasure of his heart*. They are therefore such words as proceed from a corrupt principle, or have some evil design or consequence, such as are either impious against GOD, or some way injurious and mischievous to men: not such indifferent, harmless words or discourse, as may serve for that innocent diversion and relaxation or unbending the mind, which may make us more fit for our great business, viz. serving GOD, and doing good to others, to which these entertainments may some way tend, tho' in a lower degree.

Notwithstanding all which, an affected habit or custom of much idle, useless, vain, impertinent talk about nothing, and to no end, or to no purpose, but only to get rid of so much time, which is the common business of most conversations, and of those who had rather keep any one company than themselves, may have a great deal of sin in it, if it were only upon account of the loss of that time, which might and

and ought to have been better employed both to themselves and others.

Keeping our Hearts with all Diligence, and our tongues as it were with a bridle, that we offend not in our words, or the wise and good government of our thoughts, and of our tongues or our speech, are indeed great instances of christian vigilance, and are very fair steps towards such perfection as is attainable in this state.

But the same caution and prudent care must be maintained and carried on thro' the whole course of our lives and conversation in this world. We must always *watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation* of any sort. We must therefore be very solicitous and circumspect, and ever upon our guard, against all known, or but suspected kind, or even *appearance of evil*, or of any sin whatever; and we must be always ready and forward to embrace all and every opportunity of doing our Lord's will, in promoting his honour and glory, the good of others, and the Salvation of our own Souls, by a studied, cheerful, uniform obedience to all his commands.

Now to this end we must dwell very much at home, we must *commune* often *with our own hearts*, and consider well where our greatest danger lies. We must be more especially and constantly upon our guard against all those temptations, to which either our natural temper and constitution, or any former indulgence, and want of due care in such particular instances, or that way and course of life, trade,

trade, or profession which we have chosen, or the remains of any former evil habit, not yet well conquered, may dispose us to yeild and to be overcome by them.

And if we would be safe at all times from all wilful sin, we must keep our selves always at a distance from every thing which may lead us to, and make way for our falling into it, however innocent that thing may appear to us in it self, or perhaps may be to another person in other circumstances.

We must therefore never allow our selves to gratifie any natural inclination desire or passion, in any instance which we do but suspect may be contrary to our duty. Never to do any thing which we doubt whether it be lawful or no, is a ruled case even in Pagan morality, and ought to be much more so in our more perfect dispensation.

And because in this lapsed state our bodily temper, natural appetites, and violent passions, false maxims, and the current of bad example, do so frequently controul and overbear our judgments, and warp that rule of right reason which we ought to go by, we must carefully examine whether such liberties as we have a mind to take in any kind, may not seem innocent to us, not because they are so indeed, but because they are so agreeable to that *carnal mind*, or fleshly wisdom, or inclination to sensual or worldly lusts or Rom. VIII. 7. desires, which St. Paul assures us is enmity against GOD.

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As therefore we must never knowingly, and with deliberation and choice, transgress any one of GOD's laws upon any consideration whatever; so we must never venture upon any action, nor indulge any thought, which can have any consequence, without being first satisfied in our own minds that we are within the bounds of our duty, and that what we design, think upon, or mean to do, is consistent with a present and actual belief and apprehension, that we are at that time under the eye and inspection of our Lawgiver and our Judge, to whom we must give an account one day for any transgression of his Laws, in such or such particular instances as are then before us.

Fifthly, Another general instrument of Religion, or means necessary thereto, is making such frequent reflexions on the end and design, and on the nature and importance of Christianity, and the rewards it propounds to the obedient, as may raise in us an hearty desire, and put us upon an earnest constant endeavour after all such yet farther degrees of holiness as are attainable by us in this life.

Nothing is more expressly commanded in the holy Scripture, than that we should *be perfect as our Father which is in Heaven* 1 Pet. I. 15. *is perfect, and holy as GOD, who hath called us, is holy; that we should grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST; and abound in the work of the Lord more and more; and that* 2 Pet. II. 18.

that we should, as *we have opportunity*, or ability, *do good to all men.*

And he must certainly be a very proud and arrogant, that is, a very foolish and a very bad man, who knows himself so little, as to think he is already good enough for Heaven, and that he is as fit for the society of the blessed Spirits, and the enjoyment of the most holy GOD, as he needs or should desire to be.

We must therefore be still labouring to *go on towards perfection*, by accustoming our selves to the constant exercise, or making frequent and vigorous acts of the great and fundamental graces, and more diligently practising the more eminent and peculiar virtues of the christian Religion.

Such are Faith, and Hope, and Trust, and Joy in GOD and in CHRIST our Redeemer, or an undoubting persuasion of all those truths revealed to us in the Gospel, and of the interest we have in them, whom GOD hath called to the knowledge of his grace, and hath sanctified in CHRIST JESUS, and made his children by adoption and by spiritual regeneration.

We must study to improve by frequent and serious meditation, and to invigorate more and more these and all other the great and necessary principles of all christian duties, *viz.* such a predominant, over-ruling love of GOD above all things in our hearts, as may command all our affections, our aims and designs, and may so influence and govern all our actions, that we make it our great business to obey and to serve him,

him, in hopes of that eternal life he hath promised to those who keep his commandments.

We must often enliven and excite in our minds such a sincere and hearty love to all our brethren, as engages us to lay hold on all opportunities of doing them any good in any kind, out of love to our common Father, and to our gracious Redeemer, and as being fellow-members of that body of which our Lord is the head: and such true love to and concern for our selves, that is, for our better and immortal part, as makes us keep that *one thing needful*, viz. the care of our never-dying souls, and securing to our selves, through the mercies of GOD in CHRIST, the utmost degree of happiness we are capable of, always in our eye, and obliges us to govern the whole course of our lives by these wise and fixt rules and measures.

Now the frequent and vigorous exercise of these christian graces, and the strong impressions they will make upon our minds, if they are accustomed to dwell upon them by deep and repeated thought or meditation, and a due reflexion upon what we learn in the holy Scripture concerning our duty and reward, will both direct and give law to, and also will add life, and worth, and efficacy to all our outward performances.

And tho' such consummate perfection, as exempts us from all failings, and from any coming short of our duty, is reserved for us in Heaven; yet we who are redeemed by

by the blood of CHRIST, and who are renewed and sanctified by his Spirit, and who are made heirs of his heavenly Kingdom, and temples of GOD, are upon all these accounts fitted for and obliged to such, not only beginnings, but farther degrees of perfection, as our Lord commands and requires of us in this imperfect state.

We can, and we must earnestly pray for, and long for, and endeavour after greater measures of grace and of holiness; and we can, by the assistance of GOD's grace, and our own prudent care and watchfulness, refrain from the deliberate commission of any known, wilful sin, and much more from suffering any sinful habit to live and reign in our hearts and lives. We can apply our selves with greater care and diligence than we commonly do, to study and to know, and to do the will of GOD, and to practise all the several instances of our duty in the general course of our lives, not only with more constancy and sincerity, but with more delight and pleasure.

We shall by the exercise and improvement of these graces be better disposed and enabled to pray to GOD, and to praise him, with more fervour, and with more attention, with greater humility and prostration of our Souls, and with a deeper sense of our dependence upon him, and of his love and favour to us, and with fuller assurance that he will hear and answer our requests. We shall be more incited and more forward to promote his honour and glory with more zeal and concern; and

and concern; and the good of all his children with more chearfulness and affectionate good-will.

And we must always remember, that a slight perfunctory care, and a cold, heartless endeavour in all things pertaining to GOD and Religion, is to as little purpose as a total neglect or taking no care at all. For no man, in the ordinary method of GOD's providence, ever *entred in at the strait gate which leads unto life*, without *striving*, that is, without earnestly contending with all his might, and making it his care so to do: nor will *the Kingdom of Heaven*, which deserves our regard and pains more than all other things, ever be taken without some *violence*, without such care and endeavours at least as are necessary to compass the mean advantages of this perishing life, which are not to be named with the everlasting joys of Heaven.

Now to engage us the more to the conscientious practice of a duty so plainly urged upon us, and so inculcated by the whole tenor of the Gospel, we ought farther to consider, that as holiness is the nearest conformity to the nature and to the will of GOD; so it must for that reason be the highest perfection and excellency of our nature, and consequently our nearest capacity for happiness.

That we can never be assured of the sincerity of our love to GOD, and of our being upon good terms with him, otherwise than by a constant study and endeavour to improve and increase in all those

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graces and in all those virtues which make us more like him, and so more acceptable to him.

That a continual progress in piety, and in all well-doing, is the only way to secure our perseverance to the end, without which all we have done is lost. For as the repeated exercise of every grace, and every new act of virtue, strengthens the principle, and confirms the habit, and helps to make the hardest duty both easy and natural by use and custom; so if we once come to make a stand in our Religion, and think that we have done enough for GOD and for our own Souls, we shall soon be carried down the stream by our depraved nature. And if we are not always busy and intent in the main upon our only great affair, *viz. perfecting holiness in the fear of GOD*, the enemies of our Souls, the World, the Devil, and our corrupt and treacherous hearts, will be sure to find us worse employment.

That growth in grace, and our always thus *abounding in the work of the Lord* more and more, will both give us the greatest comfort and support at the hour of death, when we shall stand in most need of it; and will also increase the weight and add to the lustre of that crown of glory, which GOD will give to those good and faithful Servants who were always improving their Lord's talent to his honour, in doing all the good they were able to others, out of love to their common Father and Redeemer.

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That GOD is pleased to lengthen out our lives in this state of probation and day of grace, with design to give us more time and opportunity to fit our selves for greater degrees of happiness in that other state: and that the more holy, the more exemplary and useful we are here, and the more *good fruit we bring forth to the glory of GOD* our Father, the greater will our reward be in Heaven.

We ought therefore frequently and seriously to remind our selves, that our happiness in the next world will be proportioned to the care and diligence which we have used in this, to fit our selves for *seeing GOD as he is, viz.* by having purified our hearts and lives by the belief and grace of the Gospel, and by our having thus retrieved to our power that image and likeness of GOD, in and after which we were at first created in *Righteousness and true Holiness.*

For both Scripture and Reason teach us, that we shall enjoy the presence and favour of GOD to all eternity, in proportion to the endeavours we have used to enjoy him as we are able in this state, that is, to unite our Souls to him, by our studying to know him more and more, and to love him above all things, and by acting our faith, and hope, and trust in him; by an entire dependence upon him, joined with a constant care to promote his honour and glory, and the kingdom of CHRIST, and to do all the good we can to all men, out of love to our Lord and

Saviour, and in obedience to his will and commandments.

And now all these things duly weighed, we must have very wrong notions of the end and design, of the nature and laws of the christian Religion, and very low and too unworthy thoughts of the joys and glories of Heaven, and of all that our Saviour hath done and suffered for us in order to our obtaining them, if we can after all this still content our selves with any lower degrees of grace and holiness in this life, or of glory in the next, that is, with lower degrees of the love and favour of GOD, and of the communications of himself to us, than the very highest we can possibly attain to, by all the most watchful care, and unwearied industry, and constant application of our whole lives to serve and to please him.

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SUNDAY XXV.

The great duty of doing good to others, not considered as it ought to be. It is not enough to do no evil. Doing good as we are able, an indispensable duty. This proved by several arguments. We do thereby best glorifie GOD. We comply with the frame and dignity of humane nature, and with the scope and general design of the Gospel. We do the greatest good to our selves both here and hereafter. A 6th instrument of Religion, viz. A prudent care in the management of our time. Some hints respecting the choice and lawfulness of a trade or profession. A caution relating to these; and other advices and directions.

SINCE this following and pursuing after holiness and a constant study and endeavour to attain to greater degrees of love towards GOD, and for his sake, of charity or beneficence and usefulness towards our brethren, seems to be too little considered, and scarce look'd upon as a duty by too many who pass for good Christians at least in their own conceit, it may be very proper here to shew the obligations we are all under from the express laws of CHRIST, and from the de-

sign, nature and tendency of our holy Religion, to promote, more and more the good of others, in our several Stations and capacities; and as St. Paul exhorts, *as we have opportunity* (or ability, as the original word is properly rendred) *to do good unto all men, and especially to them who are of the household of faith.*

Ga'. VI. 10.

For this doing all the good we can to each other, is the best way we can take to bring glory to that GOD who made us for that very end; and we do then most visibly honour and demonstrate the high esteem we have of GOD, our great love to him, and the grateful sense we have of his goodness to us, and our earnest desire to please him, when out of obedience to his commands we thus strive to imitate his goodness to all, and thus more and more to retrieve that image of GOD, in and after which we were created at first.

We do farther promote his honour, both by exciting all those to bless and praise him, to whom we are made the hands or instruments of his good providence in any kind, and also all others who by *seeing our good works*, done for the sake and directed to the glory of GOD, may be prevailed upon by our example *to glorifie our Father which is in Heaven*, by bringing forth themselves also much of the like good fruit.

We are also admonished and obliged to do good to each other by the frame and bent of our special or rational nature, as

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we are barely men. We both stand in need of one another, and we are prompted to, and are fitted by the prerogative of reason and speech for mutual help and assistance, in order to our subsisting only, and much more to any tolerable degree of happiness, or well-being in this World. Humanity most properly signifies that good nature and friendliness, or kind inclination to serve each other, which chiefly distinguishes us men from the ferity and the unconcernedness of brute beasts, for the common good of all those of their own kind.

But this *Labour of Love*, studying and endeavouring to do all we can for the advantage of each other, is yet more strongly pressed and enforced upon us Christians, by many and weighty arguments taken from that holy Religion, into the obedience and hopes of which we are baptized.

Heb. VI. 10.

For doing the greatest good to mankind which they are capable of receiving, is the general scope, design and tendency of the whole Gospel. The great love of GOD to his apostate rebellious creature man, the inexpressible kindness of our Lord and Saviour, in taking our nature upon him, that he might reconcile us to his Father by his death on the Cross, are there set forth as reasons and motives, as well as for our example; and we are expressly commanded to imitate this love of GOD, and of CHRIST to us, in doing good even to them that hate us, to our

Mat. V. 44.

Luke VI.
35, 36.

enemies, to be kind to the unthankful, and to the evil, that we may be the children of the highest, and to be merciful, as our Father is also merciful, and to love one another as CHRIST

Joh. XIII. 34.

hath loved us.

And indeed all the declarations of GOD's will and his good pleasure made known to us by CHRIST, relating to our peace with him, and to our eternal happiness; the great instances of the love of GOD and of CHRIST, proposed to our imitation; all the precepts, promises, threatenings, mentioned in the Gospel, (which is rightly styled the law of love from Mount Sion,) do generally conspire and center in this duty, viz. That we ought to express our love and our obedience, and the grateful sense we have of GOD's unspeakable goodness to us in the great work of our redemption, by doing all the good we can to the children of our common Father, and to the friends and brethren of our gracious Saviour, to all whom we are now brought into a nearer relation by the grace of the Gospel.

We may farther consider, that doing what good we can to others is the surest and the best way we can possibly take, to do, or to procure all the greatest and most lasting good to our selves. Nothing doth, nothing can so much conduce to the perfecting our nature; since this god-like temper and disposition is the nearest approach we can make to GOD himself, who is good and doth good. And that this temper fits us more

more than any other thing for the enjoyment of GOD in the next life, whom we take care to resemble the most we can in this.

Doing good to our power is also the best security we can have from and against all the evils and miseries of this mortal state. For it entitles us here to GOD's more especial care and peculiar protection and providence, whose children we hereby approve our selves to be. It entitles us to the love and favour of all good men; and to the esteem of those who have not grace, and wisdom, and virtue enough themselves to practise what they cannot but think well of in others. It entitles us to peace of conscience, and to the true solid and manly pleasure and satisfaction of living and acting up to the dignity of our reasonable nature, and to the higher improvements and obligations of our holy Religion.

And which is the crown of all, doing all the good we can, out of love to GOD and to our Neighbour, entitles us, thro' the mercies of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, and upon the promises of the Gospel, to a reward in the next world, answerable in measure or proportion, but infinitely exceeding in value and duration, to that good which, by the grace of GOD, we shall have so done in this world.

And now that we ought not to content our selves with a bare negative Religion, or doing no evil, but to charge our selves with the care of doing all that good to others

Mat. XXV.

others which we are capable of doing, and are obliged to do by that hearty goodwill and brotherly love which we owe to each other; and that the criminal omission, or a total gross habitual neglect of doing good to our christian brethren, as we have opportunity and ability, may alone, had we no other sin to answer for, condemn us at the last day, is very evident from the representation our Lord himself makes of that solemn assize, or final Judgment.

He who is then to be the Judge positively affirms and declares, that he will then and there sentence all unmerciful, hard-hearted men, *to depart from him into that everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*; of which severe doom, no other reason is there assigned by him, save only this, that they had refused, or forborn and neglected to feed, cloth, relieve and visit those hungry, naked, destitute, sick and imprisoned brethren of his, whom they saw at any time in such want and distress, and whom they ought to have relieved and succoured out of love to him, and in obedience to his commands, and as being his stewards of those estates they were intrusted with for that very end.

From whence it follows, that it is an indispensable duty of our holy Religion, to take all just occasions of doing what good we can to our brethren, even in these lower instances of relieving their bodily wants, in proportion to our abilities, and to the opportunities which GOD puts in-

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to our hands; and that if we are *wicked* or *slothful servants*, in neglecting to employ the talents our Lord entrusts us with, for his service, and for the support of those of his family, whom his providence puts in our way, and allots, as it were, to our care, we may and shall, had we no other sin but this criminal omission only, and the thus *shutting up our bowels*, when we see our brother hath need, be cast into that outer ^{1 John III. 17.} darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth for ever.

And now since we stand obliged, under so great a penalty as is the loss of heaven, and the suffering everlasting punishment, to take such care of the outward welfare, or the bodies of our brethren, we are certainly for a much stronger reason bound to study and to do them all the good offices we are able in relation to their better part, their immortal Souls, one of which, our Lord tells us, is of more value than the whole world, if a man should gain that with the loss of his Soul.

Since then the greatest good of all others is that which is done to the Souls of men, and in order to secure their everlasting happiness, we must above all things take all the care we can, and use our utmost endeavour, that our children and relations, our servants, our friends and neighbours, all we converse with, and have any interest in, and all we are more particularly concerned with and for, may be early and fully instructed in the knowledge, and

and prevailed upon, or excited and disposed, as by all other proper means, so too by our pious, holy, and unreprouvable conversation, to the diligent study and practice of all those things which are necessary in order to their everlasting peace and felicity.

For as this pious care of the Souls of our brethren ought to begin at our own families, and nearest relations, so ought it to extend it self, as we have opportunities and abilities, to all others whom we have any concern with, or more particular knowledge of, or reap any advantage from, or can find any occasion or handle whatever for our doing them and our selves so great a good. Such are all tenants to their respective Landlords; all poor labourers and handicrafts-men to those that employ them; and all dependents, and all inferiors to those who are their superiors, or who can make any such pretence to take a more particular care of them, than of others who are in a more distant relation.

Thus all noble, great and rich men, and all men in general whose lands and revenues are managed and improved for them by the toil and sweat of the poorer sort, and all great dealers and traders, who live easily and grow rich by the hard labour and pains which others take for them, will find themselves obliged by the laws of christian equity and charity, viz. of doing as they would be done by, and
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of loving their Neighbours as they do themselves, to make provision first for the Souls, and then too for a competent subsistence for them and their families, and suitable relief of the necessities of all those by whose fore travail, and usually too great hardships, they live in so much plenty and esteem, and make so fine a figure in this world; but will make a very bad one in the next, if they fail in such their duty.

Did great and rich men believe in GOD, which no man doth in earnest and to any purpose, but he who makes it his first care to obey him, and who loves him above all things; did they duly consider, that 'tis impossible for them to believe the Gospel, who receive honour one from another, and seek not that honour which comes from GOD only; that it is impossible for them who have laid up their treasures, that is, what they most love, and what they are most concerned to get or to keep here on Earth, not to have their hearts there also, and consequently not to trust in their riches more than in GOD, and so be as incapable of, and as unfit for entering into the Kingdom of GOD, as a Camel is to go through the eye of a needle; did they believe in good earnest, that they were stewards only of those many talents GOD hath entrusted them with, for the use of their fellow-servants his household, and that they must give a strict account of their stewardships, and the management of their estates, at the

the great day; did they, I say, heartily believe, and duly weigh any one of these great incontestable truths delivered by the Son of GOD himself, they would enjoin their stewards and their bayliffs to be as exact in keeping a poor's roll, as in keeping a rental of all their lands and tenements; and they would be as diligently informed of the wants of their poor and honest tenants and other dependents, as of the value of their estates, and would take all due care for their relief and supply in every kind.

They who rightly understand their Religion and their interest, who desire to be truly great and rich, *great in the sight of GOD*, and *rich in good works*, will take effectual care, that all the poor's children whom they are any way concerned with, or are in the parishes where their estates lie, and of which they are Lords or Owners in chief, should be taught to read, and should be well instructed in the knowledge, and bred to the practice of those things, without which they must be lost and undone for ever: the loss of whose Souls, where it might have been probably prevented by their care, may justly be charged upon the cruel neglect of those hard-hearted rich men, to whom GOD seems to have committed those talents of wealth and power for that end.

Bibles therefore, or at least New-Testaments, and Common-Prayer-Books, Catechisms, and other short and plain treatises

tises of Religion, as they are capable, with at least one Morning and Evening Prayer for a Family, should be provided at the charge of the rich Landlord, and be put into all their poor peoples hands; and they should be encouraged and obliged to use them daily in their houses.

One Twentieth part, or perhaps much less of the income a great or a rich man yearly receives from a Town or a Village, or which a great trader gains by the labour and pains of the industrious poor, thus bestowed, out of love and gratitude to GOD, who gives them all they enjoy, and out of compassion to those poor Souls for whom the Son of GOD was pleased to die, would make such a wise man more truly great, and more truly honourable, than all the titles any earthly Monarch can either give to others, or vainly assume to himself.

Certainly that representation of the great and terrible day of the Lord, made by him who is to be the Judge, ought to be frequently and seriously considered and laid to heart by all, and especially by all rich men. This ought more than any other thing to govern and influence their designs and actions in the good management of their estates, with a due reference to a final issue of that weight and moment, as is that of everlasting happiness, or intolerable, and endless misery, one of which must be their certain and unalterable doom.

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Mar. VI. 19, 20. If then great and rich men have been more concerned and more careful to lay up *for themselves Treasures in Heaven*, as our Lord expressly commands, than upon the Earth, and their hearts have gone along with such *their treasure*; if as *faithful and wise stewards* they have given their Lord's household their portion of meat in due season, that is, if according to the tenor of the sentence CHRIST will then pronounce, they have in proportion to the much they have received, to the great abilities and many opportunities GOD gave them, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick and imprisoned brethren of our Saviour, and taken due care for their relief and succour and welfare in every kind, they will then *inherit the Kingdom prepared*, for the Children and Friends of GOD, *from the foundation of the World*.

But if these great, and rich, and noble, and worldly wise men, have *their treasures and their hearts* here below; if they are *high-minded and trust in riches*; if they abuse those estates GOD hath committed the management of to them for the good of his family, to the sinful gratification of their own sensuality, pride or covetousness; if they are not *rich in good works*; if they have not fed, clothed, supported and provided for all the wants of their christian brethren, in a large measure and good proportion to their abilities and opportunities; they have not then *laid up in store for themselves any good foundation* for

for eternal life; and having no love of GOD dwelling in them, no bowels of compassion towards the needy brethren of their Lord, he will at the last day as certainly doom them to that *everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, as it is certain that GOD is true, and that CHRIST will judge the World, and *render to every man according to his works*.

Sixthly, A conscientious care and prudent management of our time is another great and necessary help towards all the wise purposes of Religion.

Almighty GOD having exalted us men above all the visible creation, by those nobler and divine faculties of reason and understanding, and freedom of choice, and having thereby made us capable of seeking after, of knowing, and loving, and chusing him who is the first Author of our Being, for our last end and our sovereign happiness, hath allotted us an employment suitable to this prerogative of our nature, *viz.* to attend upon him, to serve and obey him, and to promote his honour and glory here in this World, that so we may come to that endless happiness he hath prepared for his Children in his heavenly Kingdom.

We are therefore sent into this World, as into a place or state of probation and of trial, in order to our being rewarded in the next life, according as we demean our selves in this.

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And our stay in this our pilgrimage or our journey towards our heavenly Country is so very short, such a moment of time, that all the days of the life of *Methuselah* holds less proportion to an eternal duration, than a minute doth to ten hundred thousand millions of millions of years; and since a whole eternity of happiness or of misery depends in so great a measure upon our well or ill managing this *short span of life*, we have certainly all the reason in the World to make our best of every part of it, by using it for that important end for which it was given us by our Creator.

Now since GOD hath an undoubted right to all and every part of our lives, both by his having at first created us, and still preserving us every day; and since in him, by his power and provision, we live, and move, and have our being; we ought to devote and secure the general course of our whole lives to his service.

We must therefore be careful every day to work the works of GOD, that is, as our Lord informs us, we must so believe in him, whom GOD hath sent, as that we also do all to the faith, in order to obtain that eternal life he hath promised to all those that do the will of his Father.

And we do this work of GOD in general, when we exercise any lawful and useful vocation, trade, or calling, in which we are the Ministers of his providence, for the good and accommodation of each other,

other, and serving those necessities which GOD hath made, and hath made to be thus supplied by that mutual help, and the assistance we give to one another.

Provided always, that we design and manage such our calling, and our estates and income, with at least a general intention to serve GOD, in making a competent provision for, or using what we have to the comfortable subsistence of our selves, of our families and relations, and for the doing more good to others; and with a constant due regard to that strict Justice, Equity and Charity, which the Gospel enjoins us; and also with that moderate pursuit after these earthly things, which no ways hinders our seeking the Kingdom of GOD in the first place, and laying up our Treasure, and having our hearts in Heaven.

No man therefore who duly considers, that he hath a GOD to serve, and a Soul to save, and that his life is given him for these great ends, will dare to engage in any trade or profession, or course of life, till he is well assured, that he may serve GOD, and be some way useful to the World, and so work out his own Salvation in that calling or way he chooses to spend his time in, and to make his business, as he is a member of a Christian Society.

And upon this principle all trades and ways of living, which purposely, directly, or necessarily minister, to, and are supported and maintained merely by the sin

and folly, and extravagance of others, and so serve only to promote the interest of the Devil, are not only inconsistent with, but are directly opposite to the design and spirit of the Gospel, and to the end of our Lord's coming into the world, which was, *to destroy the works of the Devil*, and to found and set up the Kingdom of GOD in the hearts and lives of those who are called to the knowledge of the grace of GOD in CHRIST JESUS.

Nay, the more any trade or calling is apt to minister to vice and to folly, tho' but accidentally, the less eligible it is; and the greater care ought men to take, as they are concerned for the honour of GOD, and the safety of their Souls, never to prostitute their callings to the service of sin, never willingly to propose, or to reap any advantage or gain from the vices of others.

Nor can a life, fitted only for, and spent mostly in sports and diversions, or in softness, and ease, and pleasure, and unprofitable amusements, in frequent and formal visits to no purpose, except it be to murder so much pretious time, or in any impertinent conversation, without serving, or so much as designing any good end to our selves or others thereby, be justified, or be safely lead by any Christian; much less can a life spent in lewdness and debauchery, in drinking and gaming, and being factors to the Devil, in writing, or in hearing, or reading profane, impure and scur-

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rilous plays or romances, and other loose and wanton scribbles of the low, false wits, and celebrated buffoons of this infamous and worse than heathenish age, be chosen by, or indeed be tolerated in those who are but called Christians.

None of these or the like evil courses surely can so much as pretend to be, or belong to any other, but that *wide gate*, and that *broad way* which leads those many who go in *thereto* to destruction; and are all therefore to be avoided, like eternal Death and Hell, by those who believe the Son of GOD, and hope to enter into life, by that *strait gate* and *narrow way* of keeping all the commands of GOD, which alone he assures us *leads thereto*.

In order then to the good management of our time, we must early and with due care chuse such a calling or profession, or way of living, and so demean our selves therein, that our whole life may be a perpetual serving of GOD, even when we serve our generation, and when we serve our own necessities, in making provision for our selves and for ours, by diligence and industry in an honest and useful employment, as agreeable to his will and the laws he hath given us; or in using, like wise and good stewards, those estates GOD hath bestowed upon us, so that we may best promote his glory, and the good of others, and the salvation of our own Souls.

We ought therefore to consecrate our whole lives, our profession or calling, or general employment of our time, as well as all other designs and more considerable and deliberate actions, as at first by a particular designation, so always at least by a general intention, to the glory of GOD. Now we thus do, when we make his will the rule of our whole conduct, performing every thing we deliberate about, out of a sense of our duty, and with regard to Almighty GOD our sovereign Lord; and thus sanctifying all other motives and considerations, by subordinating them all to this our great and master design of serving and pleasing him in all we project, or undertake, and perform; or at least, in taking good heed, that we never do any thing whereby we may offend and sin against GOD in any kind, or upon any consideration whatever.

And since both sleep and some innocent recreations or diversions are necessary to support our decaying nature in this mortal life; he who knows the use and true value of time, will govern himself in all these by the end to which they are designed, viz. to keep the body in such repair, that it may be fit for the Service of the Soul, and both his Soul and Body better disposed for the Service of that GOD who made them for himself, and for that endless happiness, with which he will reward that their service and obedience.

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As every wise and good servant, who is always waiting for the coming of his Lord, will end his day with GOD, and leave himself in his care and protection, not knowing but that his Soul may be *that night required of him*, so his first thoughts at his awaking will lead him for the same reasons to *dedicate his renewed life* to his merciful Preserver, the GOD of his life, and the Author of all the good he hath, desires, or hopes for.

He therefore who knows the worth of time, and considers the account he must give for it another day, will accustom himself to so many only, and to such seasonable hours of sleep, as may best fit him for the business of life. He will not enfeeble and dull his mind, nor make his body a sink of diseases, by a surfeit of drowsie sloth, nor sleep away those advantages which more early rising would give him for health and riches, as well as for Piety, Wisdom and Holiness.

He will never make those sports and diversions, which may be innocent when used with discretion, his business or his calling; much less will he lose his time and his Soul too, in those Schools of vice, intemperate, or barely complaisant, and unaccountably wastful drinking, much and expensive gaming, which they who trade in usually lay their Souls to stake; not only by the loss of so great a part of their lives, for which they must give an account, but either by coveting always, and often

getting by fraud and indirect ways what is anothers; or by impatience, rage, cursing and swearing, when they lose what they can so ill spare.

Nor will he ever run into idle company, or do any other thing, meerly with design to get rid of or to make away with so much time. He looks upon idleness, which was one of the sins of *Sodom*, and upon the ill-placed activity of those who make sport and diversions their most serious affair, and spend more time in the company and improvement of their dogs and their horses, than in the care of their own Souls, or of those of their posterity and dependents, as a wide step into the Kingdom of Satan, who will not fail to make use of the advantage, which such weak unthinking brutes of men give him against their own Souls.

All who thus customarily and foolishly mispend that invaluable treasure, which GOD gave them for more great and worthy purposes, do most wretchedly live in direct contradiction to the design of GOD, and to the end of their creation, which was, as I before observed, to serve GOD in an active obedience to his Laws, to promote the good of each other, and to fit themselves for, and to secure to themselves the rewards he hath reserved for those good and faithful servants only, who made it their daily business to know and to do the will of their Lord.

Every man therefore who wisely considers the greatness of that glory he hopes to enjoy for ever in the presence of GOD, if he be one of his children, or a sincere Christian; and for which he must be preparing himself in this state, if he will believe the Son of GOD, by that purity of heart and holiness of life, without which no man shall ever see him; and who reflects upon that insupportable and endless misery which must otherwise be his sad portion, and who believes that GOD will reward every man according to his Works, will soon find that he cannot without the highest folly imaginable, wilfully or carelessly, and to no purpose, throw away any part of that time, which may and ought to be more carefully managed in order to securing and encreasing his endless happiness.

And he who loves his GOD, and his own Soul, as he ought to do, he whose heart is set upon the one thing needful, that better part which Mary chose, will seize upon all such portions of his leisure, as others fool and trifle away, for his improvement in spiritual, that is, in true wisdom, and grace, and virtue; for the increasing and nourishing his faith and hope, and that prevailing love of GOD above all things, which ought to influence and govern his whole life; and that comfortable assurance, that he loves, and knows GOD, by keeping his commandments, and that

that he is a child of GOD, by his being thus led by the Spirit of GOD.

'Tis recorded of one who had spent a great part of his life in that refuge of idleness and vice, the Army, and in the inhumane art of legal manslaughter, (for such is all war, if chosen and entered upon without necessity, or a sufficient reason to justify the undertaking, among us Christians, who are obliged to love as brethren,) that when he came to repent, in hopes to escape that place of torment, into which he had very probably sent so many of the men of that broad way before him, every time he heard the Clock strike, he used to say, *There is one hour more, for which I must give an account to GOD.* And another, more unquestioned Saint, used to excite himself to greater care and industry and fervour in doing his duty, by this question he frequently put to himself, *Bernarde, ad quid venisti? To what end comest thou into this world? What is thy business here?*

To all the former reflexions we may do well to add this most terrible one, which deserves to be very well considered, viz. That is those great and rich men, who love the World, and serve Mammon more than GOD, and who either waste their estates in pride and luxury, or by covetously and unjustly hoarding them up do not take due care to do that good they ought, and in such proportion as they ought, to their indigent brethren; so those

too who squander away their lives in unprofitable idleness, and childish and sinful amusements, not improving their Lord's talent as he requires, that all these have their minds so blinded by the GOD of this World, and by the false maxims and numerous bad examples they meet with there, that they usually never discern, and so never repent of such sinful omissions of their duty, till their repentance can do them no good at all. And thus do they run that horrible risque of being doomed by their Lord, as *unfaithful and foolish stewards, wicked and slothful servants*, to have their portion with unbelievers, with hypocrites, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth for ever.

And now certainly he who duly weighs these great and plain truths and doctrines of the Gospel, will find himself obliged to be much more wary and solicitous to be able to give a good account of his time as well as of his estate, and of any other ability or talent GOD is pleased to intrust him with for his glory and for the good of others, than many of the great, and the noble, and the rich, and the worldly wise men of this generation seem to understand, or to think needful.

And here it may be proper to remark, that these, and such other advices and directions relating to this matter, and to other instruments or means of Religion, which are not express divine precepts, are
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not to be so understood as to be matter of scruple and anxiety to pious and well-disposed minds, tho' they are both proper and necessary to rouse and awaken careless, negligent, unconsidering men.

They are to be used with that prudent moderation and judgment of discretion, with those allowances for persons, times and places, and all innocent circumstances of life, which a wise and a good man, one whose general conduct is directed by a predominant love and fear of GOD, and by the faith and hope of the Gospel, shall find to be most for his own advantage.

For provided the great business and end of his life, which every wise and good man hath always most at his heart, be secured, viz. the serving and pleasing GOD, doing what good he can in obedience to GOD's commands, and promoting his own eternal welfare; and the greater portions of his time, and the general course of his life be thus employed and designed; provided that the publick worship of GOD be duly attended where he hath opportunity, and no good reason for his absence, and some part of every day allotted for religious duties in his family, and in his closet; the rest of his time, as it is in other prescriptions of the like nature, may be safely left to his own disposal and good management: for such a person will always have an eye to, and will aim at those greater degrees of glory in

in Heaven, which will be proportioned to the degrees of our greater love to GOD, and of our greater care and diligence in serving him, and in doing his will here on Earth.

DEDICATION. **NU-**
 often taking an account of our lives, of our
 temper, of the general management of
 our lives, and of our particular actions,
 is another very useful and necessary means
 to secure and greatly to promote the Chris-
 tian life.
 That no man ought to live without con-
 sidering well and often, how and to what
 end he lives, and that this enquiry into
 the end and ways, should be made
 every night, is a duty which the Christian
 and pastor of some churches will add
 to the Psalter, Philippians and

SUNDAY XXVI.

Two farther means and helps towards being truly religious. 7thly, That we do frequently examine our own conduct. Advantages of this. 8thly, That we consider our selves as always in the presence of GOD; and so live as to be ever prepared for the most sudden death. The horrible danger of deferring such preparation. The happy state of those who are always ready for the coming of their Lord.

Seventhly, **D**EEP and frequent reflexion upon our own conduct, or often taking an account of our selves, of our temper, of the general management of our lives, and of our particular actions, is another very useful and necessary means to secure and greatly to promote the christian life.

That no man ought to live without considering well and often, how and to what end he lives, and that this enquiry into a man's self, and his ways, should be made every night, have been the stated rules and practice of some of the wisest and best of the Pagan Philosophers.

And

And certainly nothing would more conduce to the rooting out of all evil inclinations and first rudiments of vice and folly, to the controuling and cure of evil habits and customs of sin, to the improvement of every grace and virtue, to the approving our selves to our own consciences, and to our living in a constant fitness and preparation to appear with joy and comfort before our Judge, upon the shortest warning, than such an inward acquaintance with our selves, and taking notice every day of all that we design, speak, and do, at least with choice and deliberation, or of whatever passes in, or is done by us, which can have any consequence in relation to the duty we owe to our GOD, to our selves, or to others.

A wise and faithful Servant therefore, who is more concerned to do the will of his Lord every day, than for any other thing, and who is infinitely careful never to forfeit his love and favour upon any account whatever, will not usually, scarcely ever lay himself down to sleep, his last sleep for what he knows, without such recollection of and hearty repentance for any thing he may remember to have done amiss, or to have faultily omitted that day, as may the best he can secure his departing in peace with GOD, and with a christian hope of awakening, in a better state and place, if GOD shall please to call him hence that night.

This

This method daily used, or very rarely omitted, and never if any thing extraordinary, as entertainments, unusual business, diversions, long conversations then fell out, would not only keep us more humble, in a sense of our many failings, and of the great need we have of the grace and mercy of GOD; but would also go a great way towards the conquering those lesser irregularities and indecencies, which even otherwise good men are subject to, through surprise or inadvertency, and particularly in those slips of the tongue, by speaking unwarily evil of others, or vainly well of themselves, which are a bar and blemish to that perfection our Lord recommends.

And certainly the few minutes thus well and wisely employed every night, would be amply rewarded by that *peace of conscience*, which would follow upon our having truly repented of, and begg'd pardon for any ill we were but afraid we might have committed; or by the great blessing of being morally assured, that by the grace of GOD, we had that day lived in all good conscience before him, and had not, upon the strictest scrutiny we could make, offended so much as in our tongue.

The wiser and better any man is, and the more he still desires to be so, the more constant and exact will he be in taking this strict account of himself every day. Besides which, those to whom GOD hath given

given more leisure, and more spiritual wisdom, will generally, or very profitably, may accustom themselves to spend some of that time they devote to the weekly commemoration of the passion of our Lord, to which solemnity all the *Fridays* of the year were set apart by the primitive Church, in a more leisurely, and thorough examination of their hearts and lives, for the better perfecting their repentance, and their greater improvement in every grace and virtue, by such a thorough acquaintance with themselves, and being put more upon their guard against their own failings and infirmities for the time to come.

However, all those who have any the least love to our blessed Lord, and any tolerable care or concern for those poor souls of theirs, for which he was pleased to shed his blood, or any portion of that spiritual wisdom which comes from above, will at the least secure some part of every Lord's-Day for looking into, and settling their great affair, and so stating their accounts between GOD and themselves, as if they were assured they were of the number of those many, as no man knows but he may be, who should be that very next week summoned to appear at the Judgment seat of CHRIST.

This prudent management, and best husbandry of some good part of their time every Lord's-Day, and especially by those who have less leisure from their ordinary

dinary lawful callings on other days, if constantly and carefully attended to, would, by the assistance of GOD's grace, make all such persons lives more answerable to their holy calling; and their deaths, tho' never so sudden, more easie, more safe and comfortable to themselves; and the degrees of their eternal happiness and glory, which is reserved for the *Sons of GOD* in the next life, greater still, in proportion to this greater care and diligence they had used, to make farther progress in that exemplary holiness our Lord came to teach us here, and will reward us for hereafter.

Eighthly, But the most universal, and I had almost said infallible instrument or means of all true Religion, or *ceasing to do any evil, and learning to do all the good* which we can and ought to do, out of love to our blessed Lord, is making to our selves, if we may so say, the presence of GOD; or the keeping our minds always in an habitual, and very frequently under an actual sense of his Omnipresence, or his all-seeing eye ever upon us.

GOD is, as we all know, tho' we too often forget it, at all times present in all places, as by his infinite essence or unlimited nature, so likewise by his power, by his wisdom or knowledge of all things, by his good providence or government of all things as he pleases; & he is more especially so in Heaven, by the fuller *manifestation of his glory*. He is present also in holy places set apart for his solemn worship, and

and in the assemblies of his servants, by his grace and benediction; and in the Hearts and Souls also of all his children, whom he enlightens, and teaches, and rules, and comforts by his holy Spirit.

We ought therefore to have such frequent actual thoughts of our being always under GOD's inspection and in his sight, as may produce in us such an habitual fear and awful regard to his power and justice, and such a deep, grateful sense of his goodness, and that sincere prevailing love to him, that we may never dare to think, or to speak, or to do any thing, whereby we may displease our Lord and our Judge, our most gracious Father, and our constant Benefactor.

This frequent habitual representation of GOD to our minds, and actually as it were bringing our selves into so great a presence upon all occasions which offer, cannot but enliven and invigorate our prayers and praises, and fix our resolutions of serving and obeying him, under whose eye we then observe our selves to be, with alacrity and joy, as well as with stedfast purpose of heart. It cannot but encourage and support us in all our conflicts with, and give us the victory over, all our ghostly enemies, whole legions of whom we shall put to flight, by our thus always seeing him who is invisible, and who hath promised to assist us with his power and grace, by his holy Spirit; and to reward our persevering in our duty to the

end, with eternal Life, Happiness and Glory.

In a word, if we took due care always thus to walk with GOD, or before GOD, as Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham are said to have done, that is, to live under such an awful apprehension of his being at that time the witness of all we think, or do, or deliberate about; we should soon be so perfect and sincere in our obedience, as never to commit any known sin any more. We should then in some good measure approach the life and the happiness of the Saints in Heaven, by our thus seeing and having fellowship with GOD, and with our Lord CHRIST, and by living in his presence as far as we are capable, in this our state of pilgrimage, and distance from our heavenly Country.

For as forgetfulness of GOD, the not having him in all our thoughts, nor his fear before our eyes, is the first step we make into the paths of sin and folly, of destruction and endless misery; so is the setting GOD always before us, having his greatness, and goodness, and justice, and truth, which are himself, always in our view, both a sure remedy against any deliberate or wilful transgression of any one of his Laws, and also an irresistible argument and motive for a constant, uniform obedience to all his commands.

Now if by the use of these and the like means we do exercise our selves with St. Paul, to have always a conscience void of offence

fence towards GOD and toward men, we shall, by the grace of GOD assisting our honest endeavours, arrive at that happy state of being always so ready for the coming of our Lord, or for death and judgment, that we can never be surprised by the most sudden and unforeseen accident, to our disadvantage.

For no man seeks the Kingdom of GOD, and his Righteousness, so as that deserves, and so as he is infinitely concerned to do, who is not always in a due preparation for the sounding of the last Trumpet, or which is all one to him, for the most sudden summons to appear before his Judge.

That this is every man's duty, as well as his nearest concern at all times, is evident from the positive commands our Lord gives to his Disciples, *Let your Loyns be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye your selves like unto men that wait for their Lord. And, Be ye therefore ready; for the Son of man cometh at an hour that you think not.* Luke XII. 35. Ver. 40.
And *Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is. And again, What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.* Mark XIII. 33. Ver. 37.

The importance of all which repeated admonitions and precepts is plainly this, that all CHRIST's faithful and wise servants must live always in such a constant preparation for the coming of their Lord, and their appearing before their Judge, that they can never be surprised by the most sudden death in any sinful course, or under the guilt of any one single act of

sin unrepented of, or in any sinful neglect of their known duty.

Now that it is our biggest interest and nearest concern to be always thus prepared, will be most evident, if we consider that there is no other possible way of being at all times secured from eternal misery, by all the mercies of GOD, and by all that CHRIST hath done and suffered for us.

For the contrary disposition, or a resolute going on still in such a course of life, as makes us unfit for the most sudden death, plainly infers or includes a resolution to hazard the loss of our Souls, in case we are surprised at unawares. And since there is no day or hour of our lives, which may not, for ought we know, be our last, and no possible way of knowing which will be so, we must live every moment in danger of being lost and miserable to all eternity. This is certainly a much more dreadful hazard in its consequence, than if a man were every morning to throw a dice for his life that day, which danger would perhaps startle and awaken the most inconsiderate and negligent, as well as the most bold and fool-hardy sinner.

And this reflexion makes the folly of those men the most apparent and most unaccountable, who carefully provide against all hazards from the uncertainty of their own lives, or the lives of other men, in all their little temporal matters of money, &c. and chuse to be fools there only

only where they are most of all concerned to be wise, and who will run no other risque but that most dreadful one of all others, *viz.* of losing their Souls, and being undone for ever.

He then who can be content to live in this horribly dangerous state of unpreparedness for the coming of his Lord, as he makes sure of Hell in case of a surprise; so he lives all along in the highest probability of coming thither at last, and makes some steps towards it every day.

For not only an habit or custom of sinning, but every deliberate act of any known sin, thus committed, in defiance of the authority of GOD, makes it much more probable, that that very first act of sin will so infatuate the mind, and harden the heart, and dispose the sinner to repeat the commission of it, as that he will never recover out of the snare of the Devil, than that he will so repent, as to obtain GOD's pardon for such his bold offence and affront, in preferring his own will, and the slavery of the Devil, before the will, and just and holy Laws of his Creator.

But supposing that he who persists in such infidelity or impenitence (for that is the true case) should have some few days or weeks before he dieth, yet we know some maladies deprive men at their first onset of the use of their reason, or so far *impair their reason*, that it can serve them to no great purpose, and where this is not the case, the pains of their body,

and distraction of their minds, from the guilt of unrepented sins and an unreformed life, generally makes men never less fit to think of their great concern, or to prepare for death, than when they are nearest at Death's door.

And it ought to be yet farther considered, that such Repentance and such Faith as can give the sinner any good hopes of pardon, is not at all in his power; 'tis always the gift of GOD. And can he who hath so long, and so often despised the riches of the goodness and forbearance and long suffering of GOD, which would have led him to Repentance, can he, I say, with any show of reason, believe that GOD will not refuse him that grace now at his death, which he has neglected perhaps to ask, or at least to make use of in the whole course of his life?

But the horrible danger of living in such unpreparedness, or of mens sending repentance afore to their old age, or to their death bed, without any reasonable hope of ever overtaking it, as they generally do, who put it off at any time to some more convenient season than the present, will farther appear, if we consider, that in the usual dispensation of GOD's grace, the heart is not brought over all at once to change its inclinations, and to quit that end it hath been long in pursuit of; and especially when the change must be to such objects and to such an end, as are not only of a different kind from those which

which men had formerly set their hearts on, but of a contrary nature. Outward acts indeed may be changed when we please : but the inward affection, or the love we bear to any thing must be worn off by degrees ; and 'tis only by such a change of heart, from the love of sin to the love of GOD, that we can judge of the sincerity of our repentance.

Fear of Hell, which is well styled *the valour of a Christian*, is most commonly the first motive which brings an habitual sinner to think of amending his life. And tho' the love of GOD may begin to take place in his Soul, in proportion to the good care he takes to know and to serve him, yet that prevailing love which turns the sinner's heart from the creature towards the Creator, and fixes it upon him as his last end and his only true happiness, and which alone can make all his services acceptable to GOD, and his condition safe, and the man fit for the enjoyment of GOD in Heaven, is not without a miracle of GOD's grace wrought in the Soul all at once ; but by degrees and some length of time, as well as by deep and frequent thought and consideration, and by repeated acts of piety and devotion, and application of the Soul to GOD.

So that no man who hath the folly to put off his repentance, that is, the amendment of his life to his last sickness, or to his old age, or who still resolves to *defer it to some farther time*, can be saved in the forementioned cases otherwise than by a
mi-

miracle. And certainly that man hath no reason to hope that GOD will work a miracle for him, who hath so often resisted the motions of his good spirit, and hath abused the great patience of GOD, who gave him all that space to repent in.

And 'tis highly reasonable to believe, that GOD will have no such regard to them, who come then to him only because they can keep no longer from him, and who would sin on still if it were in their power; and consequently that they will have no other repentance, but that terrible remorse which will last as long as their never dying Spirits. For GOD hath expressly declared in the person of

Prov. I. 28, *Wisdom, that he will not answer those when they call upon him, who had hated knowledge, and had not chosen the fear of the Lord: that he will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh, who had refused to answer when he called, and who had set at nought all his counsel, and would none of his reproof.*

Thus have we shewn how great the stupidity, how deplorable, and how infinitely hazardous the condition of all those unthinking and unwary pretended or false Christians is, who desperately venture to live any day, so as that they are consigned to an irreversibile and endless state of misery, in case they die in such sad circumstances, as many thousands or perhaps millions have done before them, viz. either by a sudden stroke, or without such preparation as is then, upon many accounts,

as

as much out of their power, as it was formerly out of their thoughts and will.

And consequently we see how nearly we are all concerned at all times so to manage the whole course of our lives and actions, that we may be always safe as to our great concern, that of our immortal Souls, if the next day or this night should be our last. We are infinitely concerned so to live always in the fear and love of GOD, and with such an incessant care and application to do his will in all things, that we may never think of the coming of our Lord but with joy, and holy comfort in him, and may love his appearing, when, as our blessed Redeemer hath expressly promised, *the righteous, that is, all sincere Christians, shall shine forth as the Son in the Kingdom of their Father.* Mat. XIII. 43.

This frail mortal life, we all know, will soon be over, even with the youngest person that is now born. How soon it may be over with any one of us, we know not: we ought therefore well and often to consider, in what good preparation we are for that life which will never end. We ought frequently to consider, how the last trumpet will affect us, if it should sound this moment. And consequently we ought to be always upon our guard, to take great heed to our selves, least at any time our hearts be over-charged, not only with surfeiting or drunkenness, but even with the cares of this life, with any of these transitory things, and so that day come upon us unawares. We ought to watch and to pray alway, as our Luke Lord 34, 35.

Lord expressly commands, *that we may be counted worthy to stand before the Son of man.*

For he certainly is the only wise, and the only happy man too, who never lays himself down to sleep, nor ever arises from his bed, but in such a state of mind, in which he can die with joy and comfort, and may reasonably hope to be happy for ever in the presence and enjoyment of GOD.

And can any man now think the whole world, *all its Kingdoms, and the glory of them,* to bear any proportion to this invaluable privilege and happiness of GOD's wife and faithful servants, and dearest children?

I shall conclude the whole matter with that most important advice and divine exhortation of St. Peter, which we ought always to bear in mind, and to govern our whole lives by, that is, all our thoughts and words, all our affections, designs and actions, as by a steady rule, and unerring guide, *Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation.* And again, (that I may end with the words of that blessed Apostle and Servant of JESUS CHRIST), *Ye therefore beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware, lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST: To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

2 Pet. III. 14,
15.

Ver. 17, 18.

F I N I S.

To make this book as useful as may be, and that Servants and others may be more attentive, and consequently more improved by it, when it is read to them, it is recommended to Masters and Mistresses, to acquaint their families before hand, that some questions will be put to them concerning what they have heard. To assist them herein is the design of the following questions upon each Chapter. Note, The figures refer to the pages where the answers to the questions may be found.

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F I N I S.

A
COLLECTION
OF
Forms of Prayer
For the Daily USE of
FAMILIES,
OR OF
Particular Persons.

For the LORD's-DAY.
Relating to the LORD's SUPPER.

With a short Discourse of PRAYER.
And another of the blessed SACRAMENT.

*The Jews, the Samaritans, and the Mahometans
are better men than many who are called Christi-
ans, in that they do never go out of their doors
before they have prayed to GOD, Jos. Scal.*

*Let no man who professeth himself a Christian keep
so heathenish a Family, as not to see that GOD be
Daily worshiped in it. Author of the Whole
Duty of Man.*

L O N D O N,
Printed and Sold by Joseph Downing in Bartho-
lomew-Close near West-Smithfield, MDCCX.

COLLECTION

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Particular Persons

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before they have prayed to GOD, Job 22.

Let no man who professes himself a Christian keep
a household a Family, or not to see that GOD be
daily worshipped in it. Author of the Whole
Duty of Man, and more.

Printed and Sold by Joseph Downing in Bath-
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A

Short DISCOURSE OF PRAYER, &c.

P RAYER, or the devout address and lifting up of the Soul to GOD, in the humblest adoration of his greatness and glory, in supplications and in thanksgivings, is both a very considerable duty, and a very necessary instrument or means of the christian life.

It is that homage which we owe and pay to our Creator, for having made us men, in his own image, that is, capable of knowing, and loving, of serving and obeying him in this state; and of receiving from him the communications of his favour, and of his goodness; and being made most happy in his presence and kingdom to all eternity.

Prayer is also the only, and withal a most certain way to be preserv'd from, or deliver'd out of, or supported under all those evils which can happen to us in this life; and likewise to obtain whatever is truly and absolutely best for us, both in relation to this world, and to that which is come.

For the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man, and of him who heartily endeavours to be such, brings down from Heaven all the greatest blessings which GOD's infinite goodness can bestow on his dearest Children, even all the graces of the holy Spirit. It engages on our behalf that marvellous Almighty love whereby we are made not the friends only, but the Sons of GOD, and the adoption of his grace in CHRIST JESUS.

And that good Spirit of GOD, which is promised to all those, and to those only who ask and pray for it, with that earnestness and frequency and perseverance they ought, will both make us to be, and will also assure us that we are the children of GOD. It will enlighten our minds, direct our wills, renew our natures, reform our lives, and enable us to love the Lord our GOD above all things, and to serve him with joyfulness and with gladness of heart, and to do all his will, and to keep all his commandments with delight and pleasure.

This frequent intercourse with Heaven, by the ascent or going up of our minds to GOD in fervent prayer, in devout addresses to him, and thoughts of him, is highly recommended to us both by Scripture and Reason, as the most proper and effectual means of our growing in grace, and obtaining all spiritual advantages.

For such intimate and more immediate converse with the fountain of all wisdom, goodness and truth, and due application of our selves to him, will enlighten our understandings with all saving knowledge, and attract,

attract, and unalterably fix our wills upon the true object of rational choice, the supreme good. It will untack our Souls from this clod of Earth, to which they now grow and wherein they lose themselves; it will raise our thoughts, and desires, and aims above the smoak and dust, the petty cares, and worthless trifling concerns of this lower world.

This our converse with GOD, and with spiritual and heavenly things, as it will sublime our affections, so will it also enlarge and improve our nobler faculties; it will refine our tempers, spiritualize our natures, and will thus every way fit us for that nearer approach to, and closer union with, and communications from the great Original of our being, and center of our immortal Spirits, which is to make our happiness, and to be *our crown and our glory in the next life.*

Now from these considerations it evidently follows, that those brutal either persons or families, who neglect to call daily upon GOD, and who do not thus draw nigh to him, do in effect renounce all dependence upon GOD. They renounce all that duty which they owe to him, and all expectation of any good from him. They say unto GOD, in the language of their lives, *Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways:* and, *What is the Almighty, that we should serve him, and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?*

And thus all those wretched outsidings and figures only of men, who are sunk so deep into the brutish nature, as not to have GOD in all their thoughts, or who by a more stupid

folly, if that be possible, when *they profess to know GOD*, and own him as their Creator, yet deny to pay that homage they owe to him, do as truly *live without GOD in the world*, as those who wallow in the mire of all filthiness and impurity, or who lead the most sensual and profligate lives.

They therefore who have any, tho' but the least trace of that image of GOD in which man was at first created, remaining in their Souls, and who understand any thing of that Religion which chiefly distinguisheth man from the beasts that perish, will never pass any one day of their lives, without making devout and solemn application to the Father of their Spirits, the GOD of all grace, and the only giver of all good things.

And the more holy and heavenly-minded any persons are, and the more they desire to be so still, the more diligent and careful will they be wisely to manage all opportunities of worshipping GOD, and of improving their interest in him, and of soliciting his favour and grace both in their closets, and with their families, and especially of doing him honour in the publick assemblies Morning and Evening, where they have opportunity, and have no sufficient reason for their absence.

The unbelieving *Jews*, who worship GOD twice or thrice every day in their Synagogues; and the devouter *Mahometans*, who pray in their Moschs five times in every twenty four hours, may well be scandalized now, and will hereafter rise up in judgment against those many thousands of Christians, who out of a care-

less

less spirit, and a cold indifferency to the honour of GOD, and to their own both duty and interest, and therefore to the just shame and confusion of their faces, do slight and neglect the daily publick worship among us.

For all Christians ought seriously to consider both the dignity and the obligation of their holy profession; that they are the *called of Rom. I. JESUS CHRIST; Beloved of GOD, called to 6, 7. be Saints*; that GOD hath made or designed them to be a *chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar (or purchased) people, that they may shew forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.*

And these modern Jews, whose blindness and obstinacy we justly pity, call him an ill neighbour who omits their daily publick worship wherever they have a Synagogue, and they take good care to provide for their own poor. And certainly then he is neither a wise man, nor a good Christian, who thinks that he can lay out any part of his time better than in immediate attendance upon his Creator, and in doing him honour in his house of prayer; or can lay out any part of his money better than in relieving the wants of the brethren of his Redeemer, to whom he must shortly give an account of his stewardship, that is, how he hath managed all that time, and that estate which GOD gave him for those great and worthy purposes.

The least that can be said in this matter is, that he who without some good reason constantly or frequently omits (and so slight too) the daily publick worship, neither loves his

A 4 GOD,

GOD, nor his Neighbour, nor his own Soul, to that degree he ought.

Nor can he be presumed to have any great desire, or to be in any measure fit to enjoy GOD in Heaven to eternal ages, who can be usually hindred by any vain amusement or business, at that time unnecessary, from employing an hour or two in each day in attendance upon, and doing open honour to his Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, in those assemblies and performances which make the best representations of the heavenly state or life, which we are now capable of.

There is a solid and pious reflexion of St. *Chrysostom* on this subject: By the ascent of our mind in Prayer, we draw nigh to, and converse with GOD. He who hath no communion with GOD by Prayer, is wholly estranged and separated from him. And he who is thus cut off from GOD must of necessity fall in with GOD's enemy the Devil.

Let us all therefore be wise now on this side Heaven, into which no *wicked and slothful servant*, no *unfaithful steward* shall enter, that we may be for ever happy in the presence and joy of our Lord.

These forms of Prayer here presented to the devout Christian, to be used in his closet or with his family, were almost all of them, as to the substance, composed by persons eminent for their great piety, judgment, and learning, and some of them too, of the highest Order in our Church, viz. Archbishop *Tillotson*, Bishop *Ken*, Bishop *Patrick*, Doctor *Whichcot*, and Mr. Archdeacon *Jeffery*, &c. From which last the short discourse and most of the prayers relating to the Sacrament are

Matt.
XXV.
26, 30.

bor-

borrow'd. And some of these prayers were published by their respective authors in their life time, and others by their friends after their decease.

But none of these forms being in all points the same with those which are printed, and some of them being collected out of two, or sometimes out of more prayers of the same author; it is not reasonable to make the first author responsible for what the collector's different disposition or expression, or other like small alteration, if it should so happen, may be thought to have done to the prejudice of the first composures.

The collector hath this to plead for himself, that the prospect and hopes he had, that what was thus borrowed from these great and good men, might, by coming into more hands, fall in with the design of the foregoing Treatise, and tend to retrieve and promote the christian life, or true and sincere piety and holiness, would more then excuse the freedom therein by him taken.

One and the same of those seven prayers, which are so numbred, may be used both Morning and Evening the same day, and so all of them in course throughout the week, by adding the concluding prayer, which is at the end of the first, to each of them, varied only according to the time of the day at which it is used, for which purpose a space is left.

If any of these prayers seem too long, such paragraphs or divisions may be omitted, as any persons, for any good reason, think best so to be. Well-disposed minds will scarce think seven or eight minutes too much to be employed

ployed Morning and Evening in an affair of so great consequence, as is the immediate service of their GOD, and the necessary care of their own immortal Souls, either with their families or in their closets.

The reader will, I hope, do himself the right to peruse all these forms at his leisure, with some attention and thought; and then, if he be not provided with others more to his mind, he may use either all of them as above directed, or such and so many of them, and at such times, both in his family and by himself in his closet, as he judges may best comply with the design and ends of Prayer.

Now these ends we know are the worshiping and glorifying GOD, the knitting our hearts to him by Faith, and Hope, and Love, by a professed dependence upon him, and an entire subjection to him, the procuring to us his grace and favour, his protection, guidance and assistance, and in general the securing and promoting the interest of our own Souls, and of those, as far as in us lies, who are any way under our charge, and may be thus engaged with and influenced by us for their good.

The hundred and third, and the hundred and forty fifth psalms, being *David's* psalms of praise, are very proper to be devoutly read in those families or by those persons in their retirement, who have wisdom enough to find the leisure, and to spend that time so well both Morning and Evening, together with a Chapter, in the New Testament chiefly.

To which the *Te deum laudamus*, & *Benedictus*, those two admirable christian hymns,

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may be added by those who have not the advantage of assisting at the publick Morning Prayers in the Church.

And it might be of great use, if all children and servants were required or accustomed every Morning and Evening to repeat very seriously and deliberately to their parents or masters, or at least by themselves, their duty towards GOD, and their duty towards their Neighbour, as they are excellently summed up in our Church-Catechism; and should before they sleep consider, and beg pardon for any failure in their duty, or sin they find themselves to have been guilty of that day.

And they who cannot read should be taught to get by heart, and use the second and third collects, as they are call'd in the book of Common-Prayer, in the Morning; and the second and third in the Evening Service; or some other short Prayer, as their private devotion, as soon as they rise, and before they go to bed, or in and with their families where none can read.

If any person *who hath his treasure in Heaven*, and undervalues all things here below, at the rate they deserve, in comparison with his interest there, shall resolve to take the advantage of *having his heart there also*, some part of every hour he lives, (for so much sleep is so much death for the time it lasts) he may accustom himself to suspend the business he is about, or to retire from the company he is in, for a minute or two in each waking hour, and then devoutly and reverently lift up his Soul to GOD, in some one of those collects of our Church, which are added hereto, for that purpose.

The

The practice of this frequent ascent of the mind to GOD in such short prayers and ejaculations, hath been recommended by pious and judicious men in all ages. And it may have a very great and good influence upon the lives of many Christians, particularly in making them more careful than most are (tho' all should be so) of the good management of the rest of their time. It may, by recalling their thoughts so frequently to GOD and to their duty, be a means to secure them from many evils and hazards, or at least from such unaccountable and over-long diversions, if not misemployments of themselves, which they may be in danger of falling into, by forgetfulness both of GOD, and of their duty.

And this frequent return of the Soul to the first Author of its being, and such a constant recourse to the fountain of all good, is both the surest and best way to obtain and to improve all christian graces and virtues, and is also a very laudable and reasonable account of, and compliance with those repeated commands given us in the holy Scriptures, *To pray always; and to watch unto prayer with all perseverance; to pray every where; to pray without ceasing, &c.*

The Jews had of old a Canon or rule, that he who prays, ought always, wherever he be, to join himself with the whole Church of GOD; which they thus expound, that no man ought to pray in the singular, but in the plural number, even in his private and secret devotions.

And that admirable form of Prayer which our Lord gave his Disciples, being so expressed, makes it plain, that those prayers which

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which are fitted for greater numbers, for families or publick assemblies of Christians, may be also used by single persons, and are most properly so used for much the greatest part of them.

However, if any man thinks fit, in the confession of sins, or in any other cases, to use the singular number, he may, with a stroke of his pen, drawn under those words he thinks proper, accommodate them to his own judgment; of which there are some examples in the first parts of most of those prayers, printed in a different character for that reason.

I conclude this short account of Prayer, with a reflexion, which I take to be of the utmost importance in this matter, *viz.* That since our holiness in this life and our happiness in the next depend, in so great a measure, upon our due application to GOD by prayer, both in publick and in private, those who are most constant and regular, and who make most conscience (as all men indeed ought to do) of doing honour to GOD in his house, and of worshiping him in their own, should be infinitely careful that their daily devotion do not degenerate into a cold formality, and an heartless or bare customary performance of such their duties, without that reverence and attention which becomes those who approach the great Lord of Heaven and Earth.

Those indeed who live in the practice, or in the love of any known sin whatever unrepented of, or unreformed, and who have thus set up an idol in their hearts, do vainly hope to compound with GOD for their wicked

Prov.

XV. 8,9.

ed lives, by a few good words, and a false show of devotion. All such persons ought sadly to consider, that the oftner they approach to GOD in this impenitent state, whether in the Church or at home, the farther they are removed from him, and the less capable they are of his favour and acceptance: for not only the way of the wicked, but even his sacrifice, even his prayer, is an abomination to the Lord, so long as he turneth away his ear from hearing the law. And the prayer of the upright only, that is, of him who hath repented of and forsaken his sin, is GOD's delight.

Psalm
CXLV.

And we ought farther to remember, and very often to consider with our selves, that all cold, negligent, heartless, indevout prayer, is at the best but the sacrifice of fools, who consider not that they do evil. For GOD is nigh to those only who call upon him in truth, and who seek him with their whole heart.

Besides which, all such hypocritical insincerity, all allowed wandring or diverting of our thoughts to other objects, when we pretend to be worshipping GOD, is an high affront to the searcher of hearts, to whom we then draw nigh with our lips only, which is in effect, to deny his omniscience, and to practise on GOD himself.

We ought therefore, whenever we are about to pray, to labour to possess our minds with an actual awful apprehension of the great and tremendous Majesty we approach to, with a deep sense of the importance of those things we ask, which are of no less consequence to us than the life of our immortal Souls; with that humility which becomes Sinners, and yet with that faith and trust in GOD, which

which becomes his children, viz. That we shall receive, for CHRIST's sake, whatever we ask, so as we ought, with that due attention, and fervency, and earnestness, which may shew the great concern we have in all these things.

These are the best thoughts we can take up our minds with, whilst we are going from our own to GOD's house, and when we come there too, instead of thinking or talking about other matters at that time unreasonable. And some brief reflexion of this kind should be also generally made in all our addresses to GOD in our families, or our closets, that so our prayers may be more acceptable to GOD, and more beneficial to ourselves. For 'tis only the language of the heart, the earnest desire and inward sense of the Soul, which can reach as high as Heaven, and enter into the ears of GOD.

WE

PRAYERS *for* FAMILIES, OR PARTICULAR PERSONS.

WE humble *our selves*, O Lord of Heaven and Earth, before thy glorious Majesty; *we* heartily acknowledge thy sovereign Dominion over *us*, and all Creatures; *we* praise and magnify thy eternal Power, Wisdom, Goodness and Truth; and *we* render Thee our most unfeigned thanks for the innumerable benefits which Thou in thy great Bounty hast loaded us withal: Above all, we bless Thee for the gracious declaration Thou hast made of thy good will to us in CHRIST JESUS; by whom Thou hast invited and encouraged Sinners to return to Thee, and directed them in the way to everlasting Bliss.

We are ashamed, O Lord, to think of our great forgetfulness of Thee, and ingratitude to Thee, to whom we owe all that we have in this World, and all our hopes in the next. We most humbly implore thy tender Mercies in the forgiveness of all our Sins, whereby we have offended either in thought, word, or deed, against thy just and holy Laws. For *we* are truly sorry for all our misdoings; we do utterly renounce whatsoever is contrary to thy holy will, and we devote our selves entirely

tirely to the obedience thereof. Accept, O most merciful Father, of the renewed dedication which we make of our whole man, body, soul, and spirit to Thee.

We humbly pray Thee to assist us by thy Grace to the recovery of such a lively Image of Thee our GOD, in all righteousness, purity, mercy, faithfulness and truth, that we may know Thou lovest us. O that JESUS, the hope of Glory, may be formed in us in all humility, meekness, patience, contentedness, peaceableness, and absolute surrender of our souls and bodies to thy holy Will and Pleasure; that we may no longer live, but CHRIST may live in us, and the Life we lead in the flesh, may be by the Faith of thy Son, O GOD, who loved us, and gave himself for us.

We praise Thee, O God, for the incarnation and birth of thy Son our blessed Saviour JESUS CHRIST; for his holy Doctrine, and his exemplary Life; for his bitter and meritorious Death and Passion; for his victorious Resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into Heaven; and for his continual intercession for us at thy right Hand.

We bless Thee for the glorious descent of thy holy Spirit upon the Disciples of our Lord, at the Feast of Pentecost, whereby Thou didst enable them to preach the glad tidings of Salvation throughout the World. We bless Thee for inspiring the Pen-Men of the holy Scriptures, and for propagating and continuing to us of these Nations the light of the Gospel in its native lustre and purity, notwithstanding our many and great provocations.

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Blessed be thy Name, that thou hast trained us up in thy true Religion, and given us means and opportunities to know that Love of Thine which passes Knowledge. We thank Thee for all the blessed Operations and motions of thy holy Spirit in our hearts; that Thou hast inclined us to fear Thee, and to love Thee, and to place our contentment and satisfaction in thy love and in thy favour, which is better than life it self.

Awaken our minds, we pray Thee, to frequent and serious Reflexions upon these thy undeserved and most bountiful favours towards us; and let thy Grace continually prevent and follow us, to keep alive such a powerful sense of Thee, and of the love of our Lord and Saviour in our minds, that we may above all things love, and fear, and reverence Thee; that we may cheerfully obey Thee, and trust in Thee, and study to be approved of Thee and beloved by Thee, and may account it our highest perfection and happiness to be like unto Thee.

And help us all to approach Thee at all times with delight and pleasure, and to feel it the joy of our hearts to think of Thee, to praise thee, to give thee thanks, and to offer up our selves with absolute resignation to Thee.

Thou, who hast begun a good work in us, finish and compleat it, we most humbly and earnestly beseech Thee. Give us thy Grace continually for our seasonable relief and succour; that we persevering in all well doing, may have a solid and lively hope in our death, of coming to see Thee in that high and holy Place,

Place, where thou livest and reignest for evermore.

Bless, preserve, and defend thy holy Catholick Church; and in especial manner that part of it which thou hast planted in these Nations. And herein bless, we pray Thee, thy Servant our Sovereign; and grant that Her Ministers of State, and Officers of Justice, may conscientiously discharge the trust that is reposed in them, to thy Glory and the good of thy People. Bless all our spiritual Pastors and Instructors; succeed their Labours; and give us all Grace to follow their godly admonitions, to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake, and to be at Peace among our selves.

This may conclude the foregoing, and every one of the Six following forms of Prayer, at any time of the day.

We praise Thee, O G O D, that Thou hast mercifully preserved us the [] past; most humbly beseeching Thee to take us and all Christians into thy care this [] to keep and defend us from all evil. And help us, we pray Thee, to live always under such an awakened sense of thy Omnipresence, and such an awful apprehension that thou art about our path, and about our bed, and spiest out all our ways, that we may never think or design, that we may never speak or do any thing whereby we may sin against Thee our GOD, against any of our Brethren, or against our own Souls, and grieve thy holy Spirit, whereby we are sealed unto the day of Redemption. All which mercies

we most humbly and earnestly beg of Thee, in the Name and through the Mediation of thy Son, and our blessed Saviour JESUS CHRIST, saying as he hath taught us, *Our Father, &c.*

II.

O Lord, the high and holy One, whose Glory is above the Earth and the Heavens, we thy Creatures prostrate *our selves* before Thee in the humblest adoration of thy incomprehensible Majesty, ascribing to Thee all power, wisdom, riches, might and dominion; and acknowledging that to Thee of right belongs all worship, blessing, thanksgiving and praise, together with all honour, love, service, and obedience for evermore. Blessed be thy omnipotent Goodness which hath advanced us to such a degree of Being, that we are capable to look back to Thee from whom we come, to know Thee, to love Thee, to acknowledge thy great Bounty towards us, and to resemble Thee in wisdom and goodness. All that is within us blesteth thy holy Name for breathing into us immortal Spirits, that we may eternally admire Thee, praise Thee, love Thee, and joyfully render those grateful acknowledgments which we owe unto Thee.

We thank Thee, O GOD, according to our poor ability, from the very bottom of our hearts, for our blessed Saviour's manifestation in the flesh; for the charitable testimonies he gave of his love to mankind in the course of his Life; for that astonishing Grace in submitting himself to die for us; for his glorious

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Resurrection from the dead, and his ascension to Heaven; and for the sovereign Power and Authority which Thou hast given him at thy right Hand; for his compassionate intercession for us; and for the assurances we have received of his being the King of Glory, and of his continued kindness to us, by the coming of the holy Ghost.

We rejoice in the light of the holy Gospel, that we see the way to be happy both by the doctrine and by the example of thy Son JESUS; that we have the encouragement of his precious Promises; and such good hope of the remission of Sin, and of eternal Life, in the day when he shall judge the World in righteousness.

We thankfully acknowledge, that it is our happiness as well as our duty to be governed by Thee, and to obey thy commands; we are sensible that they are all equal, just, and good, and that thou hast done us an infinite kindness, in teaching us to deny all ungodliness, and all worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

Pardon, we most humbly beseech Thee, for JESUS CHRIST his sake, all our past offences and transgressions of thy holy Laws; the remembrance of which is grievous and bitter to us: and vouchsafe us the grace of thy holy Spirit, to enable us to do thy will with greater care and diligence for the time to come.

And grant, we pray Thee, that thy good Spirit may perpetually bear us up by the strength of our most holy Faith, and by the power of Love and hope, above all the Tem-

peations which may at any time assault us, that we may keep our selves unspotted from the world, and that no appetite of Pleasure, of glory, or of riches, may ever carry us from our duty; but we may still cleave unto Thee our G O D in all righteousness, purity, humility, charity, and all other divine virtues, of which our Lord hath given us so great an Example.

Endue us, good Lord, with a Spirit of true and fervent devotion to Thee our Creator and Redeemer; with upright, just and charitable hearts to all our Neighbours; and with temperate, contented, and humble minds in every condition and state of life, unto which Thou shalt please to call us.

Help us to be meek and gentle in all our conversation, prudent and discreet in all our affairs, good and useful in every relation, observant of thy fatherly Providence in every thing that befalls us, thankful for thy benefits, and readily disposed to every good word and work. And we humbly beg that thy holy Spirit may constantly accompany us, enabling us to think of these things, to delight in them, and to persevere in a free and willing performance of all our duty towards Thee, and towards all men, to our lives end.

Make us but stedfast in thy faith and fear and love, unwearied in well doing, patient and constant under all sufferings, full of a lively hope in thy mercy, and always both ready and willing to die, when, and as Thou pleasest; and we have enough.

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And we humbly pray Thee, that Thou wouldst be pleased, out of thy great mercy, to put an effectual stop to that Spirit of Atheism, profaneness and irreligion; to that unbelief and immorality; to that superstition and false worship; to that hypocrisy and form of godliness without the power thereof, which so dreadfully prevail in this and other Nations professing the Faith of the blessed JESUS.

Be Thou pleased to pity those who do not pity themselves; to give to all unrepenting, whether stupid and ignorant, or careless and negligent, or wilful and obstinate Sinners, a sight of their horrible danger and misery; and give them the wisdom and grace to consider and to understand, and then to believe and obey the Gospel of thy Son, to the salvation of their Souls.

And to this end, bless, we pray Thee, all those, who endeavour to promote the knowledge and sincere practice of thy true Religion; with grace to lead holy and exemplary lives, with prudence and diligence, and zeal for thy honour and glory, and with such good success, that they may be the happy instruments of thy Grace, for the setting up of thy Kingdom, and setting forward the salvation of the Souls of all men, wherever they have any opportunity, and are in a capacity for so doing.

Bless our Sovereign, and all those who are employed under Her, either in spiritual or civil Affairs, with all those graces which are necessary for the right discharge of their duties in such high Places. Prosper all their pious endeavours for the good either of mens

souls or outward estates; that true Religion and virtue encreasing, and all ungodliness and vice being put to shame, we may become a renowned Nation, and a praise in the Earth.

Guide us, good Lord, and govern us by thy Spirit of wisdom and goodness, that we may be so united to Thee here, as not to be eternally separated, when Thou shalt please to order our departure hence; but that we all at last may have a happy meeting in the other and better world, to dwell with Thee in love and joy that shall never die, through **CHRIST JESUS** our blessed Lord and Saviour.

III.

MOST gracious **GOD**, and our most merciful Father, we desire to humble our selves before Thee in a deep sense of our own vileness and unworthiness, by reason of the many sins and provocations, which we have been guilty of against thy divine Majesty, in thought, word, and deed. Forgive, O Lord, for thy mercies sake in **JESUS CHRIST**, all the sins and follies of our lives, which have been many and great, and which we do with sorrow and shame confess and bewail before Thee.

Pardon, O our **GOD**, our manifold neglects and omissions, and our slight and careless performances of the duties of Religion, without due affection and attention of mind; that we have not served Thee with that purity of intention, with that sincerity of heart, with that fervency of Spirit, with that zeal

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for thy Glory, with that care, and diligence, and constancy that we ought.

Forgive, we pray Thee, O Lord, all our sins of ignorance and infirmity, all evil thoughts of our hearts, all irregular appetites and passions, and all our sins of omission, which are more than we can number; but especially, all our wilful transgressions of thy holy and righteous Laws, for the sake of our blessed Saviour and Redeemer.

We most humbly also implore the assistance of thy holy Spirit, to enable us and all Christians to become every day better, and to reform whatever has been amiss in the temper and disposition of our minds, or in any of the actions of our lives. Grant us the wisdom and understanding to know our duty, and the heart and will to do it.

Vouchsafe us, we pray Thee, the continual presence and direction, the assistance and comforts of thy holy Spirit, whereby we may be disposed and enabled to do thy will with delight and cheerfulness, and with patience and contentedness to submit to it in all things. Endue us, O Lord, with the true fear and love of Thee above all, and with a prudent zeal for thy Glory. Encrease in us more and more the graces of charity, of meekness and humility, of truth, justice, and fidelity.

Enable us by thy Grace to govern all our appetites and passions, by temperance and purity, and meekness of wisdom, setting Thee always before us, that we may not sin against Thee. Create in us clean hearts, O Lord, and renew a right Spirit within us. Purify our Souls from all evil thoughts and inclinations, from all bad intentions and designs,

signs, from pride and vanity, from immoderate self-love, and obstinate self-will, and from all malice and envy and ill will towards any. Dispose and enable us, we pray Thee, patiently to bear reproaches and wrongs; and to be always ready, not only to forgive, but to return good for evil.

Assist us, O Lord, in the faithful and conscientious discharge of the duties of our several relations and callings; and grant that we may employ all those abilities, opportunities, and advantages Thou givest to any of us, to promote, as far as we are able, thy Honour and Glory, the happiness and welfare of all men, and the eternal salvation of our own Souls.

And we humbly beseech Thee, who art the GOD and Father of all, that Thou wouldst be pleased to have compassion upon the blindness and ignorance, upon the gross errors, and the wicked practices of all mankind. Send forth thy light and thy truth to scatter that thick darkness which covers the Nations, and overspreads so great a part of the World; that thy way may be known upon Earth, and thy saving health among all Nations.

Bless and preserve thy Church dispersed over the face of the Earth. Restore it to its unity and concord, in the acknowledgment of the truth, and the practice of righteousness and goodness. Remove out of it all errors and corruptions, all offences and scandals, all divisions and dissensions, all tyranny and usurpation over the minds and consciences of men; that they who profess the same Faith may no longer persecute and destroy

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one another; but may be kind and tender-hearted one towards another, as it becomes Brethren, and those who are heirs of the same common Salvation.

We beseech Thee more especially to be merciful to that part of thy Church, which Thou hast planted in these Kingdoms. Pity the distractions and heal the breaches of it. Purge out of it all impiety and prophaneness, all mistakes and errors, and mutual exasperations; and restore to it Piety and Virtue, and Peace and Charity.

Bless and preserve our *Queen*, and all who are in Authority under Her. Give them wisdom from above, that they may rule in thy fear, to thy Glory, and for the welfare of this thy People. Endue all the Governours and Pastors of thy Church with the Spirit of true Religion and Goodness; and make them zealous and diligent to promote it in all those who are under their instruction and care.

Be merciful, O GOD, to all who are in any affliction or distress, who labour under poverty, or persecution, or captivity, under bodily pains and diseases, or under temptation and trouble of mind. Be pleased to support and to comfort them, and in thy due time to deliver them according to thy great mercy.

And now, O Lord, we desire from the ground of our hearts to bless and praise Thee, the great Creator, Preserver, and Governour of all things; our GOD and our Saviour, our Sanctifier, and daily Benefactor. We acknowledge, admire and adore thy infinite wisdom, power, and goodness; and let all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth say, *Amen*.

We

We render thanks to Thee, most gracious GOD, for innumerable favours conferred upon us, thy most unworthy Servants; for our being, for our reason, and for all other endowments and faculties of our souls and bodies; for thy continual care and watchful Providence over us and ours, from the beginning, and through the whole course of our lives to this moment; for the pious care of our Parents, and of others who had the charge of us in our tender Years, to instruct us in the knowledge, and to engage us in the practice of the Christian Religion; for thy unwearied patience towards us after so many and so great provocations; and for thy merciful preservation of us from those dangers, to which we have been exposed at any time. We will still hope in thy goodness, O Lord, who hast been our trust from our youth; our praise shall be continually of Thee.

But above all we adore thy tender mercy and compassion to us, and to all mankind, in sending thy only Son into the World to redeem us from sin and misery; and by suffering in our nature, and dying in our stead, to purchase for us eternal life.

We bless Thee for the light of thy glorious Gospel, for the knowledge and sense we have of our duty towards Thee; for delivering us from temptations which might have been too hard for us, and supporting us under many; for the direction, and assistance, and comforts of thy holy Spirit; for restraining us by thy grace, and reclaiming us from the ways of sin and vanity; and for all the gracious communications of thy goodness, whereby Thou hast

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hast inclined our hearts to love, and to fear, and to serve Thee, and hast enabled us in any measure to do thy will.

For these, and all other thy innumerable blessings and favours to us and to all mankind, we do render to Thee, most gracious GOD, all possible praise and thanks by JESUS CHRIST our blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

IV.

MOST great and glorious Lord our GOD, the high and holy one, who inhabitest eternity, and dwellest in that light which is not to be approached. We pray Thee to look down from Heaven, the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory, upon us vile and sinful Creatures. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out all our transgressions.

And do Thou keep it for ever in the purpose and resolution of all our hearts to serve and to fear Thee for the future, and to keep all thy commandments always for our good. We pray Thee to this end to write thy laws in our hearts, and to put thy fear into our inward parts, that we may never depart from Thee.

For ever blessed be thy holy name, that when we had destroyed our selves by our wilful apostacy from Thee, and our many and great transgressions of thy just and holy Laws, Thou didst find a way for our recovery, by sending thy only begotten Son to take our nature upon him, to submit to the miseries and necessities of it, and to shed his blood

blood upon the Cross for the Remission of our Sins.

We pray Thee to raise our Souls to high and admiring thoughts of this inexpressible and amazing love of Thine towards thy unworthy Creatures; and to shed abroad thy grace into our hearts, that we may not any longer live to our selves, but to him that died for us.

Make us, we beseech Thee, partakers of those benefits and blessings which our Redeemer hath purchased and procured for us by his obedience and sufferings. Let him be to us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption. Help us by Faith to receive CHRIST, and by obedience to walk in him as we have received him.

Teach us to set alway before us the life and example of our blessed Lord and Master. Let that meekness and humility, that patience and self-denial, that contempt of the world and heavenly mindedness, that zeal for thy glory, that submission and resignation to thy holy will which appeared in him, appear likewise in us, that as he was in the world, so we also may be in the world.

Pour forth, we humbly beseech Thee, thy holy Spirit into all our hearts, to sanctifie and to renew us, to enable us to mortifie our lusts, to govern our passions, and to order our whole conversation aright, to conform us to thy image and likeness, and to make us partakers of the divine nature; and by assisting us to all that is good, and keeping us from all evil, to preserve us to thy heavenly Kingdom.

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We pray Thee to instruct us in all the particulars of our duty which we owe to Thee, and to all men; that we may herein exercise our selves always to have consciences void of offence both towards Thee our GOD, and towards all men; that we may love Thee the Lord our GOD with all our Hearts, and with all our Souls, and with all our strength, and may love our Neighbours as we do our selves; and that whatsoever we would that men should do unto us, we may do even so unto them.

And let that grace of GOD which hath appeared unto all men, and brings salvation, teach us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we may live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world, waiting always for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great GOD and our Saviour JESUS CHRIST; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie us to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Make us alway sensible, we pray Thee, of our own frailty, of the shortness and uncertainty of this life, and of the eternity of the next. And make us all careful so to live, as we shall wish we had done when we shall come to die. Let our loyns always be girded about, and our lights burning, and let us be like unto men that wait for their Lord.

We pray Thee with us to extend thy goodness to the whole world. Let thy ways be known upon Earth, and thy saving health among all nations. Pity and relieve the miseries and afflictions of all men, especially of those who suffer for truth and righteousness sake.

fake. Support and comfort them, O Lord, under their sufferings, and in thy due time deliver them out of all their troubles.

Bless thy holy Catholick Church; reform whatsoever Thou seest to be amiss in the belief and lives of Christians; and grant that all those who profess thy name, and the holy Religion of our blessed Saviour, may live as it becomes the Gospel, and depart from all iniquity.

In a more particular manner we pray Thee to be gracious to these sinful nations to which we are related; to pardon our great and crying Sins; to prevent those judgments which our Sins most justly have deserved, and to spare us according to thy great mercy. Bless and preserve our Queen; make her government a publick blessing to these nations. Let Religion, and Righteousness, and Truth, and Peace flourish under the influence of it.

And Thou who art the wise G O D, and governest all the affairs of the world, be pleased so to direct and bless all publick counsels and affairs amongst us, as that they may tend to the advancement of thy glory, to the preservation of the true Religion, and to the peace and happiness of these Kingdoms.

Bless, we pray Thee, all ranks and orders of men amongst us, and make them all in their several places and stations useful and serviceable to thy glory and to the publick good.

Bless all those to whom Thou hast committed the care of instructing and governing thy Church. We pray Thee to make them faithful to that trust which Thou hast committed unto them; and to grant, that by their

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diligent labours, and prudent carriage, and holy and exemplary lives, they may gain many unto Righteousness.

V.

ALmighty GOD, the Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, the GOD of the Spirits of all flesh, awaken, *we* pray Thee, all the powers and faculties of *our* Souls to acts of a lively sense and apprehension of Thee, that *we* may have all due regard to Thee in *our* minds, and may be in the fear of Thee while *we* are before Thee.

Put us, *we* humbly pray Thee, upon all those acts toward Thee that ever Thou madest us capable of, that *we* may duly acknowledge Thee, who art the original of our Beings; that *we* may obey and serve Thee, who art our Lord and Owner; that *we* may be thankful to Thee, who art our great and daily Benefactor.

That *we* may admire and adore Thee, who art a Being of all possible perfection; that *we* may love and delight in Thee, who art the first and the chiefest good; that *we* may believe Thee, who art most true and infallible; that *we* may place all our affiance and trust in Thee, because of thy gracious promises and known faithfulness; that *we* may rest in Thee, the center of immortal Spirits; and may ultimately refer to Thee, who art the end of all things.

Grant that in the use of our liberty, *we* may present thy Majesty with a free-will offering, and bring unto Thee the consent of our minds; that so *we* may become altogether

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ther Thine; that as we are Thine by thy creation of us, by thy maintenance and preservation, and constant providence over us, by thy gracious assuming of us into a nearer relation to thy self by thy Son, and making us the adoption of thy grace; so we may also be Thine by our voluntary devoting our selves to thy service.

To this purpose destroy out of us, we pray Thee, whatever we have acquired unnatural to the principles of thy Creation in us, by abuse of our selves, by neglect of thy grace, by compliance with the corrupt guise of this sinful, degenerate, and apostate world.

Naturalize us to Heaven, reconcile us to all the things of that high estate, that so we may not drudge in the world, nor act in a slavish spirit in the ways of Religion; but that we may serve Thee with ingenuity of mind, and with freedom of spirit, as those who are set at liberty, and delivered from the bondage and slavery of iniquity, having the law of the Spirit of Life which is in CHRIST JESUS making us free from the Law of Sin and Death.

Blessed be GOD, who hath raised up for us a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to us and forgiveness of sins. Make us partakers of that Salvation which Thou hast appointed, and which our Saviour hath wrought; and our Souls shall bless Thee to all eternity.

To this purpose bring us all, we pray Thee, within the terms of the covenant of grace, repentance from dead works, and a resolved obedience to Thee in all things; and suffer us not herein to fail, or to fall short. Give us heartily to revoke and to undo
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whatsoever we have done amiss in life, to condemn our selves, and humbly to beg thy pardon thro' the mediation of our Redeemer, and for the time to come, to leave off to sin, and to return to our duty.

Let our former miscarriages make us more modest and humble, more sensible of our own weakness and inability, and of our necessary dependence upon Thee our GOD; more thankful to Thee, for preventing us by thy grace from running into those evils which we have not committed; more vigilant and wary, not to transgress in time to come; more charitable and compassionate to our brethren, who may have failed as well as we.

Help us, we humbly beseech Thee, to make all due acknowledgment to thy Son our blessed Lord and the Saviour of the body mystical; to conceive of him for the height and excellency of his person, for the worthiness and fulness of his undertaking and performance on our behalf, according as we ought. Let us have that dependence upon him, that expectation by him, which Thou hast warranted us to have; and let us make that use of him which Thou hast set him up for, that both our faith and our hope may finally rest in GOD.

And grant, we pray Thee, that we may both be planted into the likeness of his death by mortification, self-denial, resignation to thy will; and may also bear the image of his resurrection, by spirituality and heavenly-mindedness; that so He may become a complete Saviour to us, and we may have redemption through his blood, *viz.* the forgiveness

of our Sins, and the renovation of our natures by the operation of his good Spirit.

Help us all along in life to subordinate all the affairs and transactions of time to serve the interest of our Souls in the state that is before us. Help us to shake off this vain world, and to breath after immortality and eternal glory, being in perfect reconciliation with the laws of everlasting Righteousness, Goodness and Truth, which are the Laws of Heaven. So shall we comply with thy nature, mind, and will, and fully answer the relation we stand in to Thee.

Help us to acknowledge Thee in all our ways, and not to lean to our own understandings. Take us out of an earthly and a worldly Spirit, and give us senses spiritually exercised, that we may judge and discern, favour and relish the ways and things of GOD. O let us be always under thy communication and influence, and walk in the light of thy countenance. Attract and draw us to thy Self, and stay us with Thee, and never suffer us to depart from Thee upon any temptation, provocation, or suggestion whatsoever. Transform us into the image of thy Son, conform us to his likeness, and make us Body and Soul an habitation for thy Self by thy holy Spirit.

We bless Thee for all thy mercies and favours vouchsafed to us in this life in relation to our souls and to our bodies. Be Thou for ever endeared to us by all thy goodness, kindness and faithfulness. And let us be ever engaged to Thee in duty and affection, that so with choice and delight we may serve and live to that

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GOD by whom we now live, and with whom we hope to live for ever.

Acquaint us, blessed GOD, in this day of our exercise, probation and trial, with the employment of eternity; teach and help us to have communion, and to converse with Thee our GOD here in this world by holy meditation, by heavenly ejaculations, and by frequent application to Thee by Prayer and Thanksgiving, and all other holy exercises; by constant intention of thy honour and service; by exact walking according to the difference of good and evil; that so when these frail bodies of ours shall tumble into the dust, our Souls may then readily adjoin themselves unto those immediate attendants upon GOD, the Angels and Saints in glory, and in that blessed consort spend eternity in singing Praises and Hallelujahs to that GOD, of whose grace and goodness we have had so great experience all along in life.

Help us so to order our conversation in this world, so to govern our spirits, and to lead such lives, upon which we may at any time safely die. And superadd this to all the favours Thou hast shown us all along in life, not to remove us hence but with all advantage for eternity, when we shall be in a due preparation of mind, in a holy disposition of Soul, in a perfect renunciation of the guise of this mad and sinful world; when we shall be entirely resigned up unto Thee our GOD, when we shall have clear acts of faith in GOD by JESUS CHRIST in our Souls, high and reverential thoughts of Thee in our minds, enlarged and enflamed affections towards Thee.

And whenever we shall come to leave the world, afford us, we humbly beseech Thee, such a mighty power and presence of thy own good Spirit, that we may have solid consolation in believing, and may depart in the Faith of GOD's elect; that we may escape the dreadful pangs of death, all consternation of mind, all confusion of thoughts, all doubtfulness and uncertainty concerning our everlasting condition, that so we may cheerfully follow Thee into the estate on the other side death, of which Thou hast given us so great assurance by the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, who hath brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel, and who hath promised to change these our vile bodies that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working of his mighty power, by which he is able to subdue all things unto himself. And Lord, give us in the mean time in faith and patience to possess our Souls.

Do good unto the whole world; recover thy lapsed Creation; compassionate the forlorn condition of mankind, lost in themselves, and lost to GOD, through ignorance and stupidity, through superstition, idolatry and false worship, thro' atheism, dissoluteness and profaneness. O let the light of the glorious Gospel of CHRIST break forth, and shine throughout the whole world.

Reform all things amiss in these kingdoms; controul atheism, irreligion and profaneness; establish peace, and truth, and righteousness among us to all generations. Compassionate all who are in misery and distress;

stres; be Thou, O Lord, a present help to them in the needful time of trouble.

Direct and bless thy servant our Sovereign, and all those whom Thou hast set over us in the Church or State. Furnish them with all those divine gifts and graces which may enable them to discharge their great trust Thou hast reposed in them, so as may make most for thy honour and glory, and the good of this thy Church and People.

Help us all, out of a due consideration of the reference of time to eternity, and of the infinite disproportion that is between our short life here, and that endless duration, to apply our hearts unto true wisdom, and chiefly and constantly to mind those things which are in conjunction with our everlasting welfare: and help us, we pray Thee, so to order all the actions of our lives and conversations, that GOD in all things may be glorified, and our Souls finally saved in the day of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

VI.

MOST great and glorious Lord our GOD, the Creator, Preserver and Governour of the world, and our most merciful Father in our Lord JESUS CHRIST; *we* most humbly beseech Thee, for his sake, to pardon *our* many and great transgressions of thy holy Laws, whereby *we* have made *our selves* liable to the severest of thy judgments, and altogether unworthy of the least of all thy mercies.

And be Thou pleased for his sake to bestow upon us all the graces of thy good Spirit,

rit, leading unto eternal life ; thereby both teaching and enabling us to know Thee the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom Thou hast sent, and to make it the first and the great business of our lives, to walk before Thee in all well-pleasing, and every day more than other to perfect holiness in thy fear.

Teach us, we beseech Thee, seriously to consider, that we came into this world, not to do our own will, but the will of him that sent us ; that we are no farther Christians, than we take due care, and give all diligence to perform whatever CHRIST hath commanded us, and sincerely to obey that Gospel which we profess to believe.

Help us therefore, O Lord, to walk worthy of that high calling wherewith CHRIST hath called us, and by a constant, impartial obedience to all thy commands, to keep our selves unspotted from the world.

Teach us to have our conversation in Heaven, by setting our affections upon, and by minding chiefly those things which are above, and so to lay up our treasure there, that our hearts may be there also.

Teach us ever to value thy love and thy favour more than life it self ; readily to do, and chearfully to suffer whatsoever Thou requirest of us ; to love Thee the Lord our GOD above all things, and to love our neighbours for thy sake, as we do our selves ; and herein continually to exercise our selves to have consciences void of offence towards Thee our GOD, and towards all men.

And help us all, we humbly pray Thee, to lead always such holy, unblameable lives, that we
may

may never be unprepared, or afraid to die; but that we may love the appearing, and think upon the coming of our Lord and Saviour **JESUS CHRIST** with joy and comfort; who hath delivered us from the punishment due to our Sins by his death, and from the dominion and power of sin by his Spirit; and hath made us the Sons of **GOD**, and the heirs of his heavenly Kingdom.

Together with us, we beseech Thee, to be gracious to all mankind, by making the glorious light of thy Gospel to shine unto all the dark corners of the World; that so all the Nations may see the salvation of our **GOD**, and give up themselves to the obedience of his **CHRIST**.

Bless thy holy Catholick Church dispersed over the face of the Earth, and particularly that part hereof which Thou hast planted in these Islands, with unity and purity, with peace and safety, under the protection of thine Almighty Arm; and bless every member of the same with grace to live as it becomes the Gospel of **CHRIST**, in all godliness and honesty.

Bless, we pray Thee, with the choicest of thy blessings both spiritual and temporal, thy Servant our Sovereign. Bless all who are in any Authority under Her. Grant that every one of these, and all other the inhabitants of this Land may, in their several Stations, faithfully and painfully serve to thy glory, to the maintenance and advancement of thy true Religion, and the good of this thy Church and People.

Bless

Bless the Ministers of thy holy Word and Sacraments. Make them all burning and shining lights, that so others seeing their good works, may glorify Thee our heavenly Father. Help them so to take heed to themselves and to their doctrine, that they may thereby both put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and may be the instruments of thy grace for converting Sinners from the error of their ways, and in so doing may, by thy Assistance and blessing, save both themselves and those that hear them.

Be gracious to all who are in any affliction or distress; especially those who are any where persecuted for righteousness sake. Be Thou, O Lord, their support and their refuge. Give them courage, and patience, and comfort, and strength in Thee; and in thy good time, a joyful deliverance out of all their troubles.

Bless all our friends and relations; all who have done us any good or any evil. Give to them and to us and to all Christians whatever Thou knowest to be best for us all, in reference to our temporal, spiritual, and eternal welfare.

And now, O Lord, we desire, with the humblest prostration of our Souls, to adore thy incomprehensible Majesty, and to praise thy goodness for all thy great and manifold mercies vouchsafed to us thy unworthy servants, and to all mankind. We bless Thee for thy general mercies of Creation, Preservation, and Providence; but more especially, for thy astonishing love in reconciling the world to thy self, by the death of thy only begotten Son JESUS CHRIST,

We

We bless Thee for our redemption by his Blood, for our vocation, illumination, and sanctification by his word and spirit; for our hopes of justification, and of eternal life by his Resurrection from the dead, his ascension into Heaven, and his intercession for us at thy right Hand.

We bless Thee for those measures of thy preventing, restraining, and assisting Grace, which Thou hast been pleased to bestow upon any of us, whereby thou hast enabled us to do any good thing in any measure acceptable unto Thee, and hast kept us from those sins we should otherwise have committed. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name be the praise, for whatever good Thou hast been pleased to work in us, or for us, or through, or by us, out of thy great mercy and goodness.

We bless Thee for our health and strength, for our peace and safety; for that competent provision Thou hast made for us, and ours, of all things necessary both to this life, and to a better. [*That Thou hast given us neither poverty nor riches, but hast fed us with food convenient for us*] And we humbly beseech Thee to give to us and ours, [*or to continue to us*] so much only of these temporal good things, as Thou knowest will make most for thy glory and for the salvation of our immortal Souls.

And grant to us, we humbly pray Thee, and to all Christians, the grace and wisdom to charge our selves with doing good, and with relieving the distressed Brethren of our Lord, in such a due proportion to that wealth Thou hast given [*or shalt give*] to any of us, that
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we may be rich towards GOD, rich in good works, and may, as wise and faithful stewards of the talents committed to our trust, enter into the joy of our Lord, when he shall come at the last day to render to every man according to his works.

VII.

MOST great and glorious Lord our GOD, the supream and universal Governour of the world; *we* thy Creatures, the workmanship of thy Hands, the objects of thy Mercy, do prostrate *our selves* before Thee in the humblest adoration of thy incomprehensible Majesty.

We adore, and most thanfully acknowledge thy infinite wisdom, power and goodness, so visible in thy works of Creation, Preservation and Providence; and more especially that astonishing love manifested to us in redeeming us from the power and guilt of Sin, and from death eternal, by the Bloud of thy dearly beloved Son, and the sanctification of thy Spirit.

We praise Thee, that thou hast made us men, capable of knowing, and of loving, and imitating Thee in righteousness, and holiness; and for the participation of Thee thereby. Grant that we may consider wisely and timely, what our capacity, and what our danger is; that so we may never live in such practices of sensuality and intemperance, as degrade men into beasts; or of such pride and malice, as transform men into Devils.

Refine and enlarge, we pray Thee, our faculties which are appropriated to Thee; make them fit for that employment about Thee, and enjoyment of Thee, in which the

true

true and only happiness of all reasonable Creatures doth consist. Suffer us not to live below, or contrary to our nature, through gross neglect of our selves, and shameful abuse of our faculties, enslaving our souls to our bodies: But enable us to live up to the peculiar excellency of those powers and capacities by which Thou hast distinguished us from, and exalted us above the beasts that perish.

Convince us that all sin and wickedness, all disobedience to Thee our GOD, is a separation from, and enmity against the chiefest Good; without conformity to which, no reasonable Creature can be happy. Make us blessed therefore, we most humbly pray Thee, by the daily study and practice of all those duties which we were made for; by the contemplation, adoration, and love of Thee our GOD; by recovering the original rectitude of our nature; by the habits of righteousness, which are the state of Religion in us; that so we may experience our duty to be our privilege, and that our Religion is given us entirely for our good.

Grant that by our conformity to thy nature, laws, and will, and by our imitation of Thee, we may glorify Thee our GOD, and may anticipate the happiness of the next state in our preparation for it; and so may at last obtain the compleat degree of it in thy presence for ever.

Pardon, we most humbly pray Thee, for JESUS CHRIST his sake, our many and great transgressions of thy just and holy laws; our profane neglect of Thee and of our selves, in not more early and more carefully improving those faculties Thou gavest us, in
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inquiring after and serving Thee, the Author of our being, and the object of our happiness. Pardon us that we have lived at any time without due regard to Thee, as if we were made only or chiefly for the care of the body, and for the enjoyment of this World; and that we have been governed by sense and passion, rather than by the conduct of reason, the direction of conscience, and the Laws of Thee our GOD.

Cause us at all times to submit willingly to thy chastisements, which are the remedy of our Souls, and the discipline of our Benefactor; that so we may in the worst outward condition be satisfied in Thee, and possess our souls in patience.

Teach us all duly to consider what the special nature, employment, and satisfaction of reasonable Spirits are; and make us sensible of that important design for which we live, that we may lay such a foundation as we are willing should abide unto eternity.

Help us and all Christians rightly to understand, and duly to value our true and greatest interest; to charge our selves above all things with the necessary care of our salvation; and effectually, and without delay, to provide for that Eternity, in which we must unavoidably be most happy or most miserable.

Suffer not any of us so to live here, as that when we go from hence, we shall be averse to that in which alone we can be happy, and inclin'd to those sensual and worldly gratifications, which are not to be found in the other state. Transform us therefore now, we pray Thee, into thy likeness, by the daily practice of goodness, righteousness and truth, that so
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we may make those things our exercise and our delight in this world, which we shall find in the greatest perfection in that which is to come.

Raise our apprehensions, our thoughts and desires, above all things here below, and fix them on Thee the original of our Being, our last end, and our only true happiness; that so we may be fully satisfied that our employment about Thee is our highest elevation and special pleasure, and that our Religion is the foundation of that peculiar delight, which consummate will be our happiness for ever.

Let the consideration of the great and terrible day of the Lord abide upon all our hearts continually; and help us always so to live, that we may never be unprepared for the most sudden death.

And grant, we humbly pray Thee, that when we shall appear at thy Tribunal, we may be found in perfect reconciliation with thy nature, will, and laws; and may be able to lift up our heads with joy before Thee, the Father of our spirits, knowing that our Redemption from sin and misery is fulfilled, and that we shall be for ever with Thee our GOD, observing the manifestations of thy glory, and receiving the communications of thy favour, by which we shall be made unspeakably blessed.

Restore, O Lord, thy lapsed Creation; and that all mankind may be partakers of thy mercy and favour in JESUS CHRIST, make thy ways and thy Son known upon Earth, and thy saving health among all Nations.

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Reform the state of Religion, which was set up in the perfection of wisdom and righteousness by JESUS CHRIST. And help us all to recover our primitive and original glory, by the renovation of our natures, and by the reformation of our lives. And grant that we may henceforth live in that good government of our selves, which is our natural subjection to Thee, and our direct capacity for communion with Thee.

Let all the governours of the World, especially those who are Christians, discharge their office as ministers of GOD to men for their good. And let all those who are the ministers of Religion effectually recommend it to the hearts of men, by the wisdom of their discourses, and by the holiness of their lives; that so thy Will may be done every where, and Thou mayest be glorified by all who were made for, and are capable of that service and homage, and eminently by the Disciples of our blessed Lord and Saviour.

*A Prayer in the method of the Lord's Prayer,
for Noon, or any other time.*

AL MIGHTY and most merciful Father, whose throne is in the highest Heaven, Thou didst create, and dost preserve, and art good to all mankind, and more especially to us whom Thou hast adopted for thy Children by the redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS, and by the sanctification of thy Spirit.

Grant, we humbly beseech Thee, that we and all men may, before and above all other things, seek and promote thy honour and glory

glory, in our thoughts, words and actions, by our daily worshiping and serving Thee in an unblameable, holy, and exemplary conversation.

Grant that the Kingdom of CHRIST being set up and established all over the World, and that all Idolatry and false worship, all superstition and hypocrisy, all atheism and infidelity, and all the works of the Devil being destroyed, Thou mayest for ever reign in the minds and in the hearts of all men, by their believing the Gospel, and by their carefully obeying the Laws of thy Son, and living in all sobriety, righteousness, godliness, humility, and charity.

Grant that we and all men may study to please Thee in all things; and that we may both do thy whole will with that diligence, delight and constancy, with which the Angels and blessed Spirits do it in heaven, and also may suffer whatever Thou pleasest, with an unwearied patience, and an entire submission to thy wise disposal of us in all things.

Be graciously pleased to give to us thy Children, who depend upon thy fatherly care and providence, so much only of the good things of this life from time to time, as Thou in thy infinite wisdom knowest to be best for us, in order to the life to come. And make us all wise and faithful stewards, by gladly relieving the wants of thy household, our christian Brethren, in a good proportion to that abundance Thou hast given, or shalt please to give to any of us for that end.

Pardon, we pray Thee, for JESUS CHRIST's sake, our many and great sins committed against Thee our GOD, or against

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any of our Brethren ; as we do from our hearts forgive all injuries which have been done to us by any one.

Suffer us not to fall into any temptation, whereby we may be prevailed upon to forsake or offend Thee our GOD, by any wilful Sin ; but enable us by thy grace successfully to resist and to overcome all the solicitations and snares of our ghostly Enemies, the Devil, the World, and our own evil inclinations and corrupt affections ; and not to be beaten off from our duty by any tryals of our faith and patience, which Thou shalt please to exercise us with : and keep and defend us from all manner of evil which might otherwise befall us.

For Thou, who art the great King of the World, hast all right to govern and to dispose of us, and of all things : and to Thee all the service and obedience of our whole lives is most due. Thou hast all power to preserve, to protect, and to bless us : and all Glory belongs to Thee alone, who art the first cause, and the last end, the sole Author and Giver of all good things.

We pray, hope, and believe that Thou wilt do all these things for us, which we do most humbly and earnestly beg in the Name, and through the mediation of thy Son and our blessed Saviour JESUS CHRIST ; to whom with Thee, O Father Almighty, and thy eternal Spirit, be ascribed all honour, glory, and praise, all might, majesty, and dominion, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

COLLECTS,

Which may be used at the several hours of the Day.

I.

O Lord our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting GOD, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day; defend us in the same with thy mighty power, and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

O GOD, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed; give unto us thy servants that peace which the world cannot give, that both our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by Thee we being defended from the fear of our Enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness, through the merits of JESUS CHRIST our Saviour. *Amen.*

III.

WE humbly beseech Thee, O Father; mercifully to look upon our infirmities, and for the glory of thy Name, turn
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from us all those evils that we most righteously have deserved; and grant that in all our troubles we may put our whole trust and confidence in thy mercy, and evermore serve Thee in holiness and pureness of living, to thy honour and glory, through our only Mediatour and Advocate JESUS CHRIST our Lord. *Amen.*

IV.

Almighty GOD, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnifie thy holy Name, through CHRIST our Lord. *Amen.*

V.

O Almighty Lord, and everlasting GOD, vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments, that through thy most mighty protection, both here, and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul, through our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. *Amen.*

VI.

Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in Thee, we may glorify thy holy Name, and finally by
thy

thy mercy may obtain everlasting life, through
JESUS CHRIST our Lord. *Amen.*

VII.

O Lord, we beseech Thee, mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people, which call upon Thee, and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same, thro' JESUS CHRIST our Lord. *Amen.*

VIII.

O GOD, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and so great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature, we cannot always stand upright; grant to us such strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord.

IX.

O GOD, whose blessed Son was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil, and make us the Sons of GOD, and heirs of eternal Life; grant us, we beseech Thee, that having this hope we may purifie our selves, even as he is pure; that so when he shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom, where with Thee, O Father, and Thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth ever one GOD, world without end. *Amen.*

X.

O Lord, who hast taught us, that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before Thee. Grant this for thine only Son JESUS CHRIST's sake. *Amen.*

XI.

Almighty GOD, who seeest that we have no power of our selves, to help our selves; keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our Souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the Soul, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. *Amen.*

XII.

Almighty GOD, who through thine only begotten Son JESUS CHRIST hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; we humbly beseech Thee, that as by thy special grace preventing us Thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect, thro' JESUS CHRIST our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one GOD, world without end. *Amen.*

XIII.

XIII.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life; give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit, and also may daily endeavour our selves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life, through the same JESUS CHRIST our Lord. *Amen.*

XIV.

O ALMIGHTY GOD, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men; grant unto thy people that they may love the thing which Thou commandest, and desire that which Thou dost promise; that so among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. *Amen.*

XV.

O GOD, the strength of all them that put their trust in Thee, mercifully accept our prayers: and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without Thee; grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping thy commandments we may please Thee, both in will and deed, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. *Amen.*

XVI.

O GOD, the protector of all that trust in Thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; increase and multiply upon us thy mercy, that Thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal; Grant this, O heavenly Father, for JESUS CHRIST's sake our Lord. *Amen.*

XVII.

LORD of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things; graft in our hearts the love of thy name, increase in us true Religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same; that we who cannot do any thing that is good without Thee, may by Thee be enabled to live according to thy will, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. *Amen.*

XVIII.

Almighty and everlasting GOD, we beseech Thee to give unto us such an increase of Faith, Hope, and Charity; that we may be given to all good works, and with pure hearts and minds may follow Thee the only GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. *Amen.*

PRAYERS

PRAYERS for the LORD'S-DAY,

To be added to the
Usual Devotions of Families, or
particular Persons.

A Prayer for the Lord's-Day, in the Morning.

GLORY be to Thee, O Lord our GOD, who in compassion to humane weakness, which is not capable of an uninterrupted contemplation of Thee, such as the Saints have above, hast appointed a solemn day on purpose for the remembrance of Thee. Glory be to Thee, for proportioning a seventh part of our time to thy Self, and liberally indulging the remainder of it to our own use.

Let us ever esteem it our privilege and our happiness, to have a day of rest set apart for thy service, and for the concerns of our immortal Souls; to have a day free from distractions, disengaged from the world, wherein we have nothing to do but to admire Thee, to praise Thee, to love and to serve Thee.

Give us grace to worship Thee in our Closets, with our families, and in the congregation; to spend it in doing good, as we have opportunity, in works of necessity, devotion, and charity; in prayer, and praise, and meditation. O let it be ever to us a day sacred

cred to divine love, a day of heavenly joy and refreshment, that we and all under our charge may employ that rest and leisure Thou givest to us, in giving all due worship, praise, and thanks to Thee. And grant, we humbly pray Thee, holy Father, that thy blessed Spirit, who on the first day of the week did descend in miraculous gifts and graces on the Apostles, may descend upon us, and upon all christian People; that we may be always in the Spirit of our Lord on the Lord's Day. And since the blessing of everlasting salvation, which we Christians do on this day commemorate, does wonderfully exceed the Creation commemorated by the Jews; O let our love and our praises, our devotion and our zeal, proportionably exceed theirs also. And this we beg for the sake of JESUS CHRIST our Lord.

Worthy art Thou, O Lord of Heaven and Earth, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power; for Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. Thou hast made Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens, with all their Host; the Earth, and all things that are therein; Thou preservest them all, and the Host of Heaven praiseth Thee. Glory be to Thee, O Lord GOD Almighty, for creating man after thine own image, and making so great variety of Creatures to minister to his use.

Glory be to Thee, O heavenly Father, for our Being and Preservation, for our Strength and Health, for our Understanding and Memory, for our Friends and Benefactors, and for all our abilities of mind and body. Glory be to Thee, for our competent livelihood,
for

for the advantages of our education, for all our known or unobserved deliverances, and for the guard thy holy Angels keep over us.

But above all, glory be to Thee, for giving thy Son to die for our sins, and for all the spiritual blessings he hath purchased for us; for our baptism, and our early dedication to Thee thereby, and instruction in thy holy Religion, and for all the opportunities Thou givest us of serving Thee, and of receiving the holy Eucharist, and for the grace Thou givest us duly to value and to make use of such thy favours towards us.

And for whatever sin we have escaped, for whatever good we have done or thought, for all our helps of grace, and hopes of Heaven, glory be to Thee. Let all our Souls praise the Lord, and all that is within us praise his holy Name.

Glory be to Thee, O Lord JESUS, for thy inexpressible love to lost man, for condescending to take our frail nature on Thee, for all thy heavenly doctrine to instruct us, thy great miracles to convince us, and thy unblameable example to be a guide to us. Glory be to Thee, for thy agony and bloody sweat, for all the torments and anguish of thy bitter passion. Glory be to Thee, for thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven, and Intercession for us at the right hand of thy Father. O gracious Lord, Thou who hast done so much for us, how can we ever sufficiently love Thee, praise Thee, serve Thee! Let all our Souls praise the Lord, and all that is within us praise his holy name.

Glory be to Thee, O blessed Spirit, glory be to Thee for all the miraculous gifts and

graces which Thou didst bestow on the Apostles, to fit them to convert the world; and for inspiring the sacred Penmen of holy Scripture. Glory be to Thee, for propagating and continuing to us the light of the Gospel of our blessed Lord. Glory be to Thee, for instilling holy thoughts into our Souls, for all the ghostly strength and support, comfort and illumination we receive from Thee, for all thy preventing, and restraining, and sanctifying graces. Glory be to Thee, O blessed Spirit. Let us never more by our Sins grieve Thee, who art the author of life and joy to us. Let all our Souls praise the Lord, and all that is within us praise his holy name.

Blessing and Honour, Thanksgiving and Praise, more than we can utter, more than we can conceive, be unto Thee, O most adorable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, by all Angels, all Men, all Creatures, for ever and for ever, *Amen. Amen.*

Another just before going to the Church.

MOST holy and infinitely glorious Lord our G O D, Thou art greatly to be feared in the assembly of thy Saints, and to be had in reverence by all that draw nigh unto Thee. It is an infinite condescension in thy Majesty, to suffer such despicable worms as we are to come before Thee, to wait upon Thee, to speak unto Thee, to have any thing to do with Thee in a way of grace and mercy.

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Hadst Thou dealt with us according to our deserts, and rewarded us after our iniquities, we had been long ago in that place of torment where prayer and the means of grace could do us no good at all. Pardon, we humbly pray Thee, all our abuses of thy mercies, mispending our time, prophaning thy Sabbaths, polluting thine ordinances, the unworthy returns we have made unto Thee for all thy benefits, which might justly cause Thee to withdraw thy self from us, and thy blessing from thine ordinances.

Make us truly sensible of the worth of the opportunity which Thou on these days puttest into our hands for the good of our immortal Souls; let it not be as a price put into the hands of fools, that have no hearts to use it. Help us to make a wise and a right improvement of the same, for the glory of thy name, and for the preparing our selves for our eternal rest. Let our thoughts this day be much upon that rest, and upon that wonderful love of Thine in our redemption.

Take away our hearts of stone, that are so insensible of our own vileness, and of thy abundant goodness; and give us hearts of flesh; write thy law upon our hearts, put thy fear within us, that we may never depart from Thee. Let not thy Sabbaths nor thine ordinances be continued in vain unto us; but help us, we pray Thee, to grow in grace under all the means of grace we enjoy. The older we grow, and the nearer we come to our end, make us to be the fitter for thy Self.

Make us to love the habitation of thine house, and the place wherein thine honour dwell.

dwelleth, and to esteem one day in thy courts better than a thousand elsewhere. Let it be our meat and our drink, the joy and rejoicing of our Souls, to do thy will, and to be employed in thy service.

Visit all the dark corners of the Earth with the light of thy glorious Gospel; and let all that enjoy it walk worthy of it.

Make our Sovereign, and all our superiors, thy faithful subjects and servants. Let thy Priests be clothed with Righteousness, and thy Saints shout aloud for joy.

Be in all our solemn assemblies; accompany thine own institutions with thine own blessing. Make thy word in the mouths of thy Ministers very effectual for turning many unto Righteousness.

Be with us this day in all we undertake. Let our confession of sin increase our hatred and watchfulness against it; let our praises and thanksgivings be the inward sense, and our prayers the earnest desire of our Souls; let our conversing with heavenly things have an influence upon us for the bettering of us.

Go along with us, we humbly pray Thee, into the assembly of thy servants; unite and compose our thoughts in thy presence; let us attend upon Thee without distraction. Let us consider Thou hast an eye upon us at all times, and more especially when we draw nigh unto Thee in the way of thy worship. Help us to pray unto Thee in Spirit and in Truth, because Thou art a Spirit, and requirest so to be worshiped.

Give us all hearing ears, seeing eyes, and understanding hearts. Let us hear thy word, as thy word, by which we shall be judged,
and

and which is able to save our Souls by believing and obeying it, through **J E S U S C H R I S T** our Lord ; in whose holy name and words we farther pray, *Our Father, &c.*

For the Lord's-Day, at or after Noon.

O Eternal and glorious Lord **GOD**, our Creator and Governour, our Lawgiver, Saviour, and Judge ; we own, with all humility, gratitude, and veneration, that perfection of wisdom, goodness, and power, by which Thou didst in the beginning create all things in that order, magnificence, and excellency which we behold ; so that the glories of thy nature shine forth in the works of thy hands.

We praise, magnifie, and extol Thee, for all those wonderful works, which Thou didst in six days produce ; and that resting on the seventh day, Thou didst sanctifie it to thy solemn worship, and to our great advantage.

We glorifie thy Name, that Thou hast exalted us men to such an eminent degree of being, as to make us a little lower than Angels, the inhabitants of Heaven, and the constant attendants upon the Throne of thy glory ; that Thou hast endowed us with the prerogative of understanding, and the privilege of choice ; that Thou hast made us capable of Thee, and that our higher faculties have a peculiar reserve for Thee, and cannot without sacrilege be wholly estranged and withheld from Thee.

Blessed be **GOD**, that after we had done violence to our principles, and alienated our selves from the natural use we were fitted for,

for, by breaking the Laws of our Creation and of Thee our GOD, and had provoked thy wrath, and forfeited our happiness, and introduced depravation and misery; Thou didst out of the same infinite goodness, which created us at first unto good works, create us again unto them by CHRIST JESUS, the Son of thy Love, and the Saviour of thy lapsed Creation.

Blessed be Thou, O GOD, who wast pleased to send thine only begotten Son down from Heaven, to visit and recover us, who had forsaken Thee, and undone our selves. To Thee in CHRIST we now make our addressees, and pay our homage; as by Thee in CHRIST we are taught the doctrine of our Religion and Happiness. We confess, that from him proceed all divine manifestations and communications unto men.

We bless Thee for what CHRIST has done and suffered for us; for his Birth, and Life, and Death, and Resurrection from the dead, as on this day of the week; for his ascension into Heaven (as an attestation of his Doctrine, and a reward of his Sufferings) and that he is set down on the right hand of the majesty on high, all Angels and Archangels being made subject unto him, and ministering to the welfare of those who are the purchase of his blood.

We bless Thee that Thou hast made him the author and the pattern of our Religion, and of our happiness; that by him we can understand Thee, the object of all adoration; and can approach Thee with good hope of finding favour and help seasonable at all times, and proportionable to our needs.

Grant

Grant that we may make use of him as the only true and divine Mediator between GOD and man; and that being followers of our blessed Redeemer, we may pass (as he did) through a religious life, and a temporary death, to a joyful resurrection and a glorious immortality.

Thus fit us at last to be for ever with the Lord, and with the most humble prostrations and rapturous joy to adore him, who has redeemed us by his blood, and saved our Souls from death eternal.

Separate us on these holy days from all worldly thoughts and imaginations, that we may be at intire liberty for the use of those means, and for the exercise of those duties in which we have sacred communion with Thee, and by which religious dispositions are established in us, and unchangeable resolutions of living religiously, upon full satisfaction of reason and judgment that our Religion is intirely and absolutely for our good; and that Thou hast been exceedingly gracious to us, in making us capable of Religion, and in laying us under the most natural obligation to be religious.

Grant that in the addresses which we make unto Thee by Prayer and Thanksgiving, on behalf of our selves, and of all christian People, and of all mankind; and in the addresses Thou makest unto us by the ministry of thy word, we may feel such impressions of thy image upon our Souls, as may enlarge our veneration of thy Majesty, and our longings after the compleat, and nearest, and eternal, and uninterrupted converse with Thee in Heaven.

Suffer us not to rest in the means, without attaining the end; or to think it sufficient for our recommendation to Thee and approbation by Thee, that we have enjoyed the liberty and privilege of speaking unto Thee, and of hearing Thee speak unto us: but let those transforming religious exercises have their full and proper effect, in order to the renewing of our natures, and the reforming of our lives, that we may be sanctified and made holy, by practising the several instances of holiness, and may become like unto Thee, by imitating Thee in all Goodness, Righteousness, and Truth.

Let us and all others who wait upon Thee this day, according to thy appointment, become the better all our lives for the religious exercises of this day, that so we may be prepared for, and allured of that everlasting rest in Heaven, which Thou hast provided for those, who are in the temper of their spirit and in the course of their lives, the children of GOD. Grant this according to the design of him who is in the most exalted and peculiar sense THE SON OF GOD, and the Saviour of men, JESUS CHRIST our Lord; in whose name we further pray unto Thee, saying, *Our Father, &c.*

For the Lord's-Day at Night.

MOST great and infinitely glorious Lord our GOD, who art exalted far above the Heavens, and above the praises and apprehensions of the best of thy Creatures; we render unto Thee all possible Praise, Honour

nour and Glory, for what Thou art in thy self, and unto all thy Creatures.

We adore thy infinite wisdom, power and goodness, so apparent in creating, preserving, and providing for them. The Heavens declare thy glory, O GOD, and the Firmament shews thy handy work. The eyes of all wait upon Thee, and Thou openest thy hand, and fillest them with good.

But what shall we render unto Thee, most gracious GOD, for thy unspeakable goodness unto mankind, not only in making us capable of serving and enjoying Thee; but in providing for us a Saviour to reconcile and renew us, when we had forfeited thy favour, which was our happiness; and lost thine image, which was our excellency and glory!

We praise Thee, that we live in a place where thy Gospel is preached, and the way to Heaven so clearly revealed; where we have so many opportunities of hearing from Thee, and of waiting upon Thee; that this day we have enjoyed the means of being happy with Thee for ever. We pray Thee to accompany the same with thy blessing to that end. Let us be the better for the sermons we hear, for the ordinances we enjoy, for the duties we are imployed in. Let the fruit be unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Let our thoughts be much upon that happy state where we shall offend Thee and our selves no more; but shall reap our Redeemer's purchase for those that sincerely love and serve Thee.

Look in much mercy upon all mankind; let all the ends of the Earth see the salvation of our GOD. Increase the number of

true believers; add daily to thy Church such as shall be saved.

Forgive the crying sins of these nations; turn us unto Thee by a speedy and unfeigned repentance and reformation, that iniquity may not be our ruine. Compose our differences, make up our breaches, heal our divisions.

Endue our Sovereign with all necessary qualifications for her present and future happiness. Let none of our Magistrates bear the sword in vain, but be faithful to that trust committed to them.

Let the doctrine of thy Ministers be pure, and their lives exemplary, for the good of Souls; accompany their endeavours with thy blessing. Bring seasonably to our remembrance what we read or hear of thy word: let us so have it always in our minds, that we may not dare at any time to sin against Thee.

As we are every day nearer our end, let us be every day more and more fit for keeping an eternal Sabbath with Thee in Heaven. Return gracious answers to the prayers of thy servants. Pardon what Thou hast seen amiss in us, or any others this day, through **JESUS CHRIST**, who hath taught us thus to pray; *Our Father, &c.*

A Plain

A Plain
ACCOUNT
 OF THE
Institution, Nature, and End
 OF THE
LORD'S SUPPER;

And of that
 Preparation which is needful for the
 due Receiving it.

AS the baptism of Christians was taken up from a like use of baptism among the *Jews*; so the *Lord's-Supper* was taken up from a like use of eating bread and drinking wine with thanksgiving to GOD, at or after the celebrating of the *Passover*: at the close of which *Passover*, as the *Jews* were wont to eat bread and drink wine with thanksgiving to GOD, the master of the family first taking the bread, and afterwards the cup of wine into his hands, and pronouncing the thanksgiving then used by them at each action, and then delivering them to the rest of the company; so did JESUS CHRIST finish his *Passover* with the twelve Apostles, who were his Family.

And after the *Jewish Passover* was finished, our Saviour, by a distinct action, did institute and celebrate the *Lord's-Supper*, the whole

Luke XXII. performance and doctrine whereof is contained in two verses only.

19, 20. Now this action of CHRIST is, according to his express command, to be repeated by Christians, and that action is to be understood according to his explication of it.

2 Cor. III. By the word *Testament* or *Covenant* used here and elsewhere, we must understand 6. *the Institution of Religion*. The Jewish Religion, and the christian Religion, are each of them called a *Testament* or a *Covenant*. When the two institutions are distinguished one from the other, the Jewish is called the *first* and *old Covenant*; and the Christian is called the *second* and the *new Covenant*.

By the *Blood of the new Covenant*, and by the *new Covenant in that Blood*, is meant the same thing: for as the one form of words is said to be used by CHRIST, in the history of this institution written by St. Matthew and St. Mark; so the other form of words is said to have been used by CHRIST in the history written by St. Luke and as the *Blood of the Sacrifice* which was used in the setting up the Religion of the Jews, is called the *blood of that Covenant*; so the *Blood of CHRIST* (our great propitiatory sacrifice) is called the *Blood of this Covenant*.

Exodus XXIV. Ver. 8.

Luke XXII. 19. Matthew XXV I 28.

Luke XXII. 20.

1 Cor. XI. 26, 27. Romans VII. 4.

Thus said, *This is my body which is given for you: and This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

And as by the *Blood shed for many*, or for you, is meant death; so by the *body which is given or broken for you*, is meant death. This is CHRIST's death, that is, this is the sacrament of his death; this is the memorial of his death:

For

For this is to be done *in remembrance of him*, and to shew forth his death. 1 Cor. XI 24, 25, 26.

The blood of CHRIST is the blood of the Covenant: repentance and remission of sins is the substance of the Covenant. By this Covenant, and the death of CHRIST, which was the federal Rite, we are absolutely obliged to repentance, and conditionally assured of pardon. The Lord's Supper is not properly the federal Rite, but the memorial of it. The death of CHRIST was the federal Rite; and the Lord's-Supper is the memorial of CHRIST's death. Luke XXIV. 47.

Nothing can more powerfully affect the consciences of men, than the death of the Son of GOD on their behalf, and for their sakes. Nothing can give us a more true sense of the heinousness of our sins, nor affect our hearts with a deeper sorrow for, and displeasure against them, than the serious consideration of the bitter sufferings of our blessed Saviour, to redeem us from that eternal death which is the wages of sin, and to reconcile us to GOD, and to purchase for us that eternal life which is the gift GOD through the same JESUS CHRIST our Lord.

Nor can any thing more effectually and strongly engage us to love our blessed Lord, and to dedicate our selves entirely to his service, than his having thus laid down his life for us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, whilst we were yet his enemies.

And as we are under obligation from the death of CHRIST to repent, and to live religiously, and are encouraged so to do by the assurance of pardon and eternal life, if we

do live religiously ; so all this works upon our reason, for our satisfaction and persuasion, so far as it is well and seriously considered by us ; and it cannot be considered unless it be remembred.

i Cor. X.
16.

The cup of blessing which we bless, as St Paul accounts for this matter, or that wine which we Christians drink with thanksgiving to GOD in the Lord's Supper, *is the communion* or communication *of the blood of CHRIST* ; by this memorial of his death we have communion with CHRIST our Saviour, considered as dying for us, whose death is the propitiation for sin, and the confirmation of the new Covenant or Testament, or of that Religion which was set up at his death, and according to which Religion we are bound to live. And *the bread which we break and eat* in the Lord's-Supper, being a figure and memorial of his death, when his body was broken, or pierced thro' and torn by the nails, and by the soldier's spear, *is the communion of the body of CHRIST*, or our communion with him considered as dying for us.

The end of this institution then, we see, is *the remembrance of CHRIST*, and of *his death* ; and doing this action for a memorial of him. If therefore we consider what CHRIST is, *viz.* GOD dwelling in, and united to, and manifesting and communicating himself to us by JESUS CHRIST, our divine Lord and King, Lawgiver, Saviour and Judge : if we consider what the death of CHRIST is, *viz.* the attonement for sin, and the sanction of our Religion ; we must conclude from all this, that as our Religion is the duty of repentance, encouraged by the pro-

promise of forgiveness; and as a propitiatory sacrifice is an obligation to repentance and an assurance of pardon; so a resolution agreeable to this, is that disposition of mind with which we are to celebrate the sacrament of the body and blood of CHRIST, that is, of his death.

For the true and necessary preparation for our celebrating the Lord's Supper is such a faith in CHRIST the Mediator, as works in us a steady, effectual resolution of living according to his laws, in hopes of obtaining that *remission of sin*, and that *eternal life* which he hath purchased for those who thus believe and obey him.

When we remember the death of CHRIST, and the salvation he hath thereby wrought for us, and the setting up our Religion by our Lord at his death, as often as we receive the holy sacrament, all our joy and thankfulness must center at last in our living by the grace of GOD, according to our Religion.

Nor can there be any other available preparation for the thanksgiving in the Lord's Supper, but a full preparation of mind, and a firm resolution, together with a sincere, actual endeavour to live according to that Religion, the setting up of which, by the Son of GOD at his death, we do thus commemorate. And they who thus do celebrate the Lord's Supper at any time, are in no danger of *eating and drinking unworthily*.

Let us therefore, generally speaking, some time before we come to this sacrament, retire from the world, and take into our most serious consideration what our Religion is,
and

and what our lives have been. Let us take all pains necessary for the bringing our minds to this determination, that our lives shall be hereafter such as our Religion is, and particularly in those instances in which they have been otherwise.

To this purpose let us read and study, apply and settle in our Souls such truths of GOD (natural and supernatural) as may, by the impressions they make, reconcile the temper of our spirits to the rule of our Religion; and prevail with us to walk worthy of that high and holy calling wherewith GOD hath called us.

And with this disposition of mind, made actual and lively by foregoing religious exercises, let us come to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and have communion with all those who belong unto the Church of GOD in CHRIST.

But after all, the great and standing preparation for worthily receiving the Lord's Supper is to walk circumspectly every day, and so to live in all good conscience towards GOD, and towards all men, as to be always well prepared and ready for our personal summons to CHRIST's Tribunal by the most sudden death or sickness.

And as no man can be truly said to be *a wise and a faithful servant*, but he who thus waits for his Lord, and who thus loves his appearing; so this true friend of CHRIST's, who is careful to do whatsoever he commands him, cannot but be at all times both duly prepared, and willing upon all opportunities that offer, to approach the table of his Lord. For in this sacrament all the grounds, reasons
and

and motives of his faith, and hope, and love to his good GOD, and to his merciful Redeemer, and the assistance of GOD's love to him, and of CHRIST's having laid down his life to save him from his sins, and from that everlasting punishment which they had deserved, are represented to our outward senses, according to our Lord's own appointment, in order the more to affect our hearts, and to make more deep and lasting impressions on our minds, and so more strongly to engage our love and our obedience to him.

And is the whole visible world now an equivalent, or fit to be put in competition with this high privilege of the children and faithful servants of GOD? who, as they are always doing their Father's will, and serving their Lord, can at all times with joy and gladness think upon, and wait for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great GOD and their Saviour JESUS CHRIST; and who consequently hereto most cheerfully embrace all opportunities of doing what he so expressly commanded in remembrance of him.

And on the other side, how poor and wretched, how truly pitiable a thing is the most potent Monarch, the most noble illustrious Prince, the most wealthy Mammonist in the christian World, if being a slave to sensuality, or pride, or covetousness, and so having no more rational hope in CHRIST, than he hath love to him, and care to please him, he lives in a perpetual, in an hourly hazard of dying in his sins, and so having his portion with unbelievers in eternal death and misery; and consequently, he can never think

think of his own death, or of CHRIST's coming to judge the world, but with the utmost dread, and most cruel pangs of horror, and guilt, and confusion!

And therefore every such servant of sin, either in effect excommunicates himself by an habitual neglect, if not contempt, of a plain command of CHRIST: Or, if he comes sometimes to his table, out of custom or formality, or to appease that little conscience he hath, but still without reforming his temper, or amending his life, he there *eats and drinks judgment*, or farther condemnation to himself. He provokes God to punish him for profaning that holy ordinance, by coming to it without examining himself whether he be in the faith, and so repents of his sins, and so believes the Gospel, that he stedfastly resolves to obey CHRIST in all things for the time to come; or rather, certainly knowing, that he neither so believes nor repents, as not to return, after that solemnity is over, to his former ill courses. *O that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!*

Deut.
XXXII.
29.

FORMS

FORMS of PRAYER, &c.

To be used,

Before, At, and After the Celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Prayers to be used before Receiving.

They may be used also in the CHURCH, before the Office begins, or whilst others are Receiving.

I Come to Thee, O Lord my GOD, from whom are the preparations of the heart, and the good disposition of our minds for thy worship and service. Fit me, I pray Thee, and all those who shall approach thy holy table, for these solemn duties, by an hearty contrition for our sins, and a sincere resolution to do better for the time to come.

Stir up, I humbly beseech Thee, such pious affections and dispositions in all our Souls, and fill our minds with such holy meditations as are suitable to this occasion. Accept of the expiation which thy Son hath made for all our transgressions, by the sacrifice of himself, as of a lamb without blemish.

Grant to us all such a sense of our sins, and of the sufferings of our blessed Saviour for them, as may affect our hearts with a deep sorrow for our sins, and an eternal hatred and displeasure against them; and may effectually engage us to love him, and to live to him who died for us, JESUS CHRIST our blessed Saviour and Redeemer.

Cleanse

Cleanse us, O Lord, from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that we may be meet guests for thy holy table, and may be real partakers of those blessings and benefits which are represented in the sacrament of CHRIST's body and blood.

Strengthen, O GOD, all good resolutions in us. Enable us, by thy grace, faithfully to perform the conditions of that covenant which we made in our baptism, and do intend to renew in the holy sacrament, by dedicating our selves entirely, and for ever, to the service of our blessed Redeemer, who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood. To him be all honour and glory, thanksgiving and praise, love and obedience, forever and ever. Amen.

An Exercise of Repentance.

MO ST gracious GOD, and my most merciful Father, I prostrate my Soul at thy footstool, most humbly acknowledging, to thy glory and my own shame, that notwithstanding the goodness of thy commands, in keeping of which there is great reward; notwithstanding the declarations of thy wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, especially of those who hold the truth in unrighteousness; notwithstanding the gracious offers of reconciliation in CHRIST JESUS, to all penitent sinners, I have very often and in many kinds sinned against Thee. I have grossly neglected and abused my self, and I have abused thy patience and long-suffering towards me. The many sins I have

com-

committed do testifie against me; and my own heart condemns me.

I have sinned contrary to the admonition of my conscience, and to the conviction of my judgment, presuming to do what thou hast forbidden, and neglecting to do what Thou hast commanded.

I have neither loved Thee, my GOD and my Father, with that ardency of affection; nor have I worshiped Thee with that profound humility, with that attention and devotion; nor have I served Thee with that zeal for thy glory, nor yet with that diligence, and care, and constancy that I ought to have done: nor have I made all that use I ought of those advantages and opportunities of promoting the good of others, and of working out my own salvation, which Thou hast been pleased to put into my hands.

I have lived contrary to the obligations I am under from nature and from grace, and contrary to the profession I have made of virtue and christianity, contrary to my duty and to my hopes, forsaking Thee, and my own mercies.

All this I call to mind with sorrow of heart, and with repentance unfeigned, upon the most serious consideration, being satisfied concerning the excellency, reasonableness, and necessity of piety and holiness, and the great unreasonableness of all vice and sin; and resolving from henceforth, in subserviency to Thee, and by the assistance of thy holy Spirit, to cease to do evil, and to learn to do well, according to the doctrine of JESUS CHRIST our Saviour. Amen.

A Deprecation of Punishment.

O Most great GOD, and Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, who hast assured us by thy Son, that Thou wilt pardon and save all those who believe, and repent, and obey the Gospel; and that thy wrath and vengeance shall fall on all those who are finally impenitent and incorrigibly unrighteous.

I acknowledge that I am obnoxious to that wrath and vengeance, by which Thou mightest most justly, long before this time, have cut off my life and my hope, and have consigned me to a portion in eternal death. Thou mightest have given me over to the torment of a guilty conscience, and to the dominion of sin, and to a reprobate mind, and have made me miserable in this world, and in the other.

Make me deeply sensible, I pray Thee, of the great evil of my manifold sins and high provocations, and work in me a hearty contrition for them. And then be Thou pleased, according to thy tender mercies, to pardon all my transgressions, for the sake of my blessed Saviour and Redeemer, who shed his blood upon the Cross for the remission of my sins, and who hath promised that Thou wilt give us all those things which we ask of Thee in his Name.

For, O Lord, there is mercy with Thee that Thou mayest be feared; and thou desirest not the death, but the conversion of a sinner; and Thou art long-suffering, not willing that we should perish, but that we should come to repentance and be saved.

Let

Let that patience and goodness of thine, which allows us farther time for the reformation of our lives, and for the renovation of our nature, be accompanied with such gracious influences of thy holy Spirit, that in dependence upon Thee, who workest in me both to will and to do, I may work out my own salvation with fear and trembling; that being successful through thy gracious assistance, in recovering thy divine image, my reconciliation to Thee may be a pledge and evidence of thy reconciliation to me; and that I may escape the consummation of misery in the other world, by an hearty repentance for all my past sins, and amendment of my life.

Suffer me not again to provoke thy indignation, by revolting to my former sins, or consenting to any other; but grant that being faithful unto the death, I may be delivered by my blessed Saviour from the wrath to come, and may attain to the crown of life which is eternal in the Heavens, for JESUS CHRIST his sake.

*A Thanksgiving for JESUS CHRIST,
and Salvation by him.*

MOST blessed and glorious Lord GOD, the Author of our Beings, and the Father of our Spirits; I thy Creature and Servant, whom Thou hast taken into a special relation to thy Self through JESUS CHRIST, making his Disciples the adoption of thy grace, do present my grateful acknowledgments, for that Thou hast manifested thy self in our flesh, and nearly united thy self unto
F our

our nature in thy only begotten Son. I bless Thee for the glorious design of the incarnation of the WORD, which in the beginning was with GOD, and which was GOD, in order to the reconciliation and salvation of men : and for that satisfaction Thou hast received by his obedience to the death, thereby atonement being made for sin, and such vindication of the honour of thy Name, Laws, and Government, that Thou dost, thro' his blood, encourage the repentance of sinners by the assurance of pardon.

Lord, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the Son of man, that Thou shouldest so regard him, as to cause the Eternal WORD to become the Son of man, that we might become the Sons of GOD!

Let the consideration of the divine authority which our blessed Saviour has over us, as our Lord and King, our Lawgiver, Saviour and Judge, influence my whole Soul into a compliance with him, according to the relation he stands in unto us ; that I may submit to his laws, follow his example, confide in his salvation, and may provide to give an account of my self at his Tribunal.

Never suffer me to forget him who loved my Soul unto the death, and whose blood is the price of my redemption ; and let the remembrance of what he has done and suffered for me engage my heart to love him and to serve him for ever.

Another before Receiving.

MOST holy and Almighty Lord our GOD, the Father of mercies, the GOD of peace and comfort, we praise Thee for that

that Thou art pleased to vouchsafe to us this happy opportunity to improve our selves in christian wisdom and holiness, and to make the nearest approaches to thy divine Majesty. Help us, we pray Thee, to draw nigh to Thee at thy holy Table, with the greatest humility and devotion of Spirit, and there to receive the renewed pledges of thy love, to our very great increase in Faith and Hope, and in Love to Thee our GOD, and to all the world.

O fill us, we pray Thee, with a lively and strong sense of thy bounteous goodness which hath been so many ways expressed towards us. Fill us with pious dispositions to receive more of it, according to thy precious promises in CHRIST JESUS.

Stir up in us such thankful acknowledgments to Thee, such hearty resolutions to obey Thee, such earnest desires and longings to partake more and more of thy divine nature, such love, delight, and joy in well doing, that our Souls may be lifted up above, to that glorious place where our dear Saviour is; and we may comfortably expect, and be truly prepared for a blessed translation thither at the great day of his appearing.

*Prayers to be used at the time of Receiving,
or with respect to that time.*

I Lift up my Soul to Thee, my GOD, humbly imploring thy blessing upon me, and thy gracious assistance of me in the holy action I am now about. Forgive whatever Thou seest to be amiss in me, or in any of thy servants; and accept of our sincere desire

to perform an acceptable service to Thee, through JESUS CHRIST. Blessed be GOD for his unspeakable gift, his dearly beloved Son JESUS CHRIST, in whom we have redemption thro' his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

Another.

THIS is, O Lord, the blood of the New Testament. Grant that I and every one of us may so receive it, that it may be to us for the remission of all our sins. And tho' we have so often and so wretchedly broken our part of that covenant whereof this Sacrament is a seal; yet be Thou pleased to make good thine, to be merciful to our unrighteousness, and to remember our sins and our iniquities no more. And be Thou pleased also to put thy Laws into our hearts, and to write them in our minds, and by thy grace dispose our Souls to such a sincere and constant obedience, that we may never again provoke Thee. Lord, grant that in these holy mysteries, we may not only commemorate, but may effectually receive our blessed Saviour, and all the benefits of his death and passion

Another.

BLESSED be the Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, who hath caused his Son (the habitation of the most high GOD, in and by whom he manifests and communicates himself to the children of men) to be born, and to live, and to die, and to rise again, and to ascend into Heaven, that he may

might be the author and the pattern of our Religion and of our happiness, our Lord and King, our Lawgiver, Saviour, and Judge.

Blessed be GOD, that the kingdom of Heaven is come, and that the most perfect state of Religion is set up, at and by the death of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, which is the great propitiation and blood of the New Testament or Covenant, by which we are obliged to repentance and the obedience of a holy life, and by which we are assured of the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection to a happy immortality.

May the remembrance and consideration of the death of CHRIST prevail with me to live religiously, that my Soul may live for ever.

I eat this in remembrance of CHRIST, and of his death; and blessed be the glorious name of GOD for ever, for our Religion, and for our salvation by JESUS CHRIST.

I drink this in remembrance of CHRIST and of his death; and blessed be the glorious name of GOD for ever, for our Religion, and for our salvation by JESUS CHRIST.

I thus commemorate the obligation my Soul is under by way of a covenant with GOD, which is established by the blood of his Son: and I renew the dedication of my self, soul and body to his service, for which I was created at first, and to which I am created anew in CHRIST JESUS, and by his Religion.

Blessed be GOD for discharging the consciences of men from the burden of Jewish ceremonies; and for securing the Religion of men against the depravations of idolatry and superstition, by setting up the Religion of CHRIST; in which there is the most compleat repetition

tion of the rules and measures, of the principles and reasons of virtue and righteousness, and the most glorious substance of all the ancient types in our Lord JESUS, who is *the divine medium*, means or way of our addresses to GOD, and of GOD's communications to us.

Prayers to be used after Receiving, at home, or in the Church whilst others receive.

I Praise and magnifie thy great and glorious name, O Lord my GOD, for the blessed opportunity afforded to us this day, of commemorating thy infinite goodness and mercy to us and to all mankind, in sending thy only Son into the world, to take our nature upon him, to submit to the infirmities and miseries of it, to live amongst us, and to die for us; and that to preserve the memory of this great love and goodness of Thine to us for ever in our hearts, Thou hast been pleased to appoint the blessed Sacrament for a solemn remembrance of it. Grant, O Lord, that we may faithfully keep and perform that holy covenant which we have this day so solemnly renewed and confirmed in thy presence, and at thy table. Let it be an eternal obligation upon us of perpetual love and obedience to Thee. Let nothing seem hard for us to do, or grievous for us to suffer for thy sake, who whilst we were sinners and enemies to Thee, lovedst us so as never any man did his friend. Grant that by this sacramental, and all other solemn addresses made to Thee, according to thy will, there may be conveyed to our Souls new spiritual life and strength, and such a measure of thy grace and assistance,

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ance, as may enable us to a greater care of our duty for the future, that we may henceforth live as becomes the redeem'd of the Lord, even to him who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, and now sits on the right hand of the throne of GOD, to make intercession for us.

Another.

LORD, I am not my own, but am bought with a price, even the precious blood of thy dearest Son, that I should no longer live unto my self, but unto him that died for me, and should glorifie GOD in my body and in my spirit, which are GOD's. I consent to that most gracious covenant which is established by the blood of JESUS CHRIST; and I here renew the dedication of my self, soul and body, to thy service, according to the doctrine, and after the example of my blessed Saviour.

Blessed be the Mediator of that new and better covenant, which is established with better promises, and hath brought in everlasting righteousness, and a better hope, by which we draw nigh unto GOD with a true heart and assurance of faith. The doctrine of CHRIST is the word of eternal life; his Laws are the transcript of the divine nature; by observance of them we are changed into the image of GOD, and made partakers of a divine life and happiness. May his word never depart from our minds, nor his law out of our hearts; but living always under the power of divine truth, may we be made partakers of the divine nature, and become meet for those regions

ons of blifs and glory, where nothing but what bears the image of GOD can dwell.

Create. O GOD, and quicken ſuch apprehenſions of thy goodneſs to us in our Souls, as may never die and decay; but may be in us a continual ſpring of religious life and motion; that the ſame mind may be in us which was in CHRIST JESUS, and we may live on earth as if CHRIST lived in us; that ſo we may be qualified for, and aſſured of living with him for ever in the neareſt approaches unto, and moſt bleſſed communion with GOD; in whoſe preſence is life, and at whoſe right hand are pleaſures for evermore. *Amen.*

Another. **B**LESSED GOD, who haſt made us for thy ſelf, and for happineſs by the knowledge, ſervice, and enjoyment of thy ſelf; grant, we humbly pray Thee, that theſe our addreſſes unto Thee may enlarge, excite, and quicken our due regard to, and our veneration of thy Majeſty, increaſe our love of Thee, and make us long more earneſtly for the moſt perfect, uninterrupted, and eternal communion with Thee in Heaven. Grant that we may never reſt in the means, without attaining the end; but that all theſe religious exerciſes may have their full effect, for the renovation of our natures, and for the reformation of our lives; that we may become every day more holy by the practice of holineſs in all its inſtances, and more like unto Thee our GOD, by imitating Thee in Truth, Righteouſneſs, and Goodneſs, thro' JESUS CHRIST our Lord. *Amen.*

